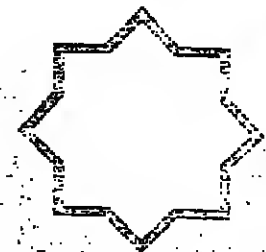


The Star



Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly



Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

Une circulaire controversée du ministère de la Culture
Voir page 10

HAYAT AMMAN SUITES HOTEL
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AMMAN, 30 JANUARY — 5 FEBRUARY 1997, VOLUME 7, NUMBER 38, 350 fils

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

All set for coming elections

Government wins debate on single vote system despite opposition

By Hamdan Al Hajj

Special to The Star

LAST SUNDAY marked the most heated debate in the life of this parliament, when the Lower House discussed the temporary one-man-one-vote election law in the presence of 76 deputies. They were divided between opponents, who want the government to present a new "modern and civilized electoral law" as promised, and supporters.

After a long and often heated debate, the single vote law was approved by a majority of 51 votes, despite the protest of opposition deputies.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabari called on the House to pass the law promising that the government will undertake to submit a new draft law that would cover all the gaps in the current (temporary) law. This would be however after consultation with popular political, social and professional activists.

Thus, any new draft law will basically rest on the one-man-one-vote formula. Any changes or amendments thereafter will take into consideration controversial aspects, like the administrative divisions, the age of the voter, supervision over elections, making Jordan a one electoral district, the possibility of canceling the quota and other minor



Opposition failed to make a point

changes. A new draft law is currently being studied by a government committee on the basis of the single vote system to avoid any misunderstanding or disapproval by the majority of people. The Star has learned. However, there is a possibility of reviewing the issue of seats allocated to Christians, Chechens and Circassians. The Christian quota will be abolished—it is thought that the present quota gives them a wider representation than they really deserve. During the session disputes

erupted between deputies and the government, and among deputies on the one hand and Speaker Sa'ad Hayel Al Snor, on the other. The session also witnessed a verbal confrontation between Toujan Faisal and Al Snor, as the former described the session as unconstitutional because it was convened 37 minutes late. According to Lower House internal regulations, the speaker is supposed to fix another date if the session is delayed for more than an hour. Faisal later said ironically

that when the next elections are held according to the single vote system and if any candidate contests, then he will win the case because neither the law nor the session are constitutional.

When Faisal accused Al Snor of blenching the dignity of the Lower House, he ordered her to leave the session.

Another stormy argument took place between Islamic deputy Abdullah Akaish and Farah Al Rabudhi (Christian). They hurled verbal abuse at each other. Hence, the prime minister intervened and the session was suspended for half an hour until a reconciliation between the two deputies was reached.

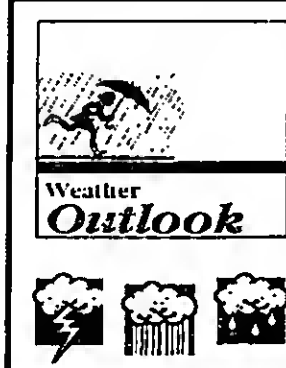
Another verbal clash took place when deputy Taid Al

Qadhi accused the Minister of Interior Awad Khleifat of forging the elections. Khleifat reacted nervously and refused such a claim since he was not in charge during previous elections. This tussle ended by Al Qadhi apologizing to Khleifat. However, despite resuming the session, the situation remained tense.

For their part the opposition, led by the Islamic Action Front, strongly criticized the temporary election law claiming that it undermines national unity, encourages tribalism and reinforces sectarianism.

They also described it as undemocratic and inefficient. The Islamists fear that the law aims at limiting their representation in the House.

Continued on page 2



● Jordan is likely to be affected by a cold mass coming from North Europe causing temperatures to plunge and rain to fall, Thursday and Friday, according to the weatherman. Snow is expected to fall in the coming days over the high mountains of Ajloun and Al Sharah.



His Majesty King Hussein received last Tuesday Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at Al Nadwa Palace in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Hassan. Arafat congratulated the King on a successful knee surgery. The two leaders discussed the latest developments on the peace process after the implementation of the Hebron deal. President Arafat and Prince Hassan held a meeting in which they reviewed bilateral relations and agreed to hold the Joint Jordanian-Palestinian Higher Committee to reactivate the agreements signed between the two sides.

Kuwaiti officers beat Jordanian prisoners

AMMAN (Star)—The situation of the 34 Jordanians who were imprisoned in Kuwaiti jails after the last Gulf War has become critical and requires official intervention. Their families staged a sit-in last Tuesday in front of the Foreign Ministry and the Red Cross. They were protesting the fate of their relatives after being attacked and beaten by members of the Kuwaiti army last week.

According to a memo they have written based on confirmed information dated 27 January, from a Kuwaiti jail, more than 100 persons from the Kuwaiti special forces broke into the cells of prisoners on 22 January and attacked them with clubs. The prisoners (who are Palestinians and Jordanians) were badly beaten and

Continued on page 3

JEA threatens action if memo is not implemented

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer

THE DELAY in implementing the memorandum of understanding between the government and the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA), signed last November, ends the honeymoon era between the two sides.

The memo which was signed three months ago, aims at improving working conditions, increasing salaries and promotions for engineers in the public sector. The JEA agreed to give the government a two-month period in executing the memorandum of understanding. The deadline was over last week.

The engineers are accusing the government of stalling the implementation. However, Minister of Administrative Development, Dr Kamal Nasser told The Star that the Cabinet, Wednesday, discussed the concerns of the professional associations and "hopefully we will soon follow up on their demands." The former head of the Lawyer Associations, who signed the agreement on behalf of the government, says that the delay in implementing the memo is not deliberate but it is due to what he termed as "slow processes and to the fact that in Ramadan the Cabinet only meets once-a-week."

But the minister's statement did not cool down the anger of the association's leaders. Today, Thursday, the JEA general assembly holds an extra-ordinary meeting "to discuss their response to the government's in action," said Husni Abu Ghaida, vice president of the JEA.

"We knocked on all doors but so far we have received only promises," he warned the government that they would escalate industrial actions if their demands are not met. "The government would be held responsible for that."

The Engineers Association, led by the prominent government opponent, Laith Shbeilat, is the largest union in the country. It has about 35,000 members, and is dominated by Islamists.

"The memorandum should be implemented immediately. Why the delay, after all the agreement was signed by two ministers with the blessing of the King," Abu Ghaida added.

Both the government and the JEA agreed to form a special committee to implement the articles of the memorandum, but the committee was not established. The association also put the blame on the government for that.

Continued on page 2



The Mercedes-Benz A-Class, to be introduced in Europe as a 1998 model, will establish an entirely new market segment. The innovative five-passenger A-Class offers all the Mercedes core values—especially safety, comfort and reliability—as well as the roominess of a mid-size car and the versatility of a small van. A unique double floor "sandwich" body positions the engine, transmission, suspension and fuel tank underneath the passenger cell. The A-Class could eventually appear in the US market as a zero-emission electric vehicle sometime after the year 2000. (PR NewsFoto)

Activist monitors Palestinian human rights abuses

By Nicholas Goldberg

LA Times-Washington Post

News Service

BEIT SAHOUR, West Bank—When Fayed Qumsieh was found dead in his cell a week ago Saturday, the Palestinian police immediately declared him a suicide.

But the explanation didn't quite fit the facts. Fifty-five-year-old Qumsieh's fractured hand, for instance, was hard to explain, as were the bruises on his cheek and his broken nose. And it was hard to understand how he could have hanged himself from a 4-foot-high bed.

Qumsieh's wife and children, well aware of the reports of abuse, torture and even murder in Palestinian prisons, were instantly suspicious. But they were reluctant to talk freely about their fears.

"Around here, you have to be careful, keep your mouth shut," explained a close relative of the dead man. "There are not many people you can trust."

In the end, the person the family chose to confide in was an unimposing, somewhat halting man with wire-rim glasses who arrived at the house, sat down in the bedroom, and pulled out a yellow legal pad from a black briefcase. It was the same routine he has followed in the cases of each of the 11 Palestinians known to have died in the custody of the Palestinian Authority since it came to power under the terms of the Middle East peace

process.

"My name is Bassem Eid, and I am an expert in these cases," he said, speaking sympathetically but not conceding to the victim's wife. "I'm going to ask you a lot of questions."

A 38-year-old Palestinian who grew up in East Jerusalem, Eid is a deeply controversial figure in his own community. For years, he was one of the premier human rights workers in the West Bank, documenting all manner of abuses against Palestinians by Israeli soldiers and settlers when they beat Palestinians, broke their bones, demolished their houses.

But these days, Eid has shifted his focus. With Yasser Arafat in power in Gaza and the vast majority of Palestinians finally living under self-rule, he has turned his attention to the Palestinian Authority.

Several months ago, Eid left the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem, where he had long worked, in order to create the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, the first independent organization dedicated solely to investigating human rights abuses by Palestinians against Palestinians.

"I can say that these violations by the Palestinian Authority are much worse than the Israeli violations," Eid said in an interview last week, speaking words that many Palestinians might consider treason.

"It's not that I prefer the occupation—certainly I don't. For many years, I fought against the occupation. But these violations are much more painful. From your enemy you can expect only bad things. But from the Palestinian Authority that we fought for and which liberated us, it is much more painful."

The Palestinian Authority doesn't like him, either. When Eid concluded in one of his B'Tselem reports that the Preventive Security Service, one of the numerous police agencies operating in the West Bank, had been abducting, torturing and shooting suspects, the agency's head, Col. Jibril Rajoub, responded by accusing Eid of lying and being "an agent of the Israeli police." In an era when those who collaborated with Israel were being routinely assassinated, many considered Rajoub's words dangerous.

Confronted for comment last week, Rajoub repeated the unsubstantiated charge. "He is a creep. He's cheap. He's a cheap informer for the Israeli police and I don't want my name mentioned in a story about him," he said. "He doesn't have any morals."

In January 1996, Eid was arrested and held for 25 hours by Force 17, a special unit of the Palestinian security forces that reports directly to Arafat.

Continued on page 2

Smoker's lawsuit ignites complex chain reaction in France

By John-Thor Dahlburg

LA Times-Washington Post

News Service

PARIS—For 35 years, Richard Gourlain has puffed away on pungent puff-filled Gauloises. Nothing has stopped him—not even three operations to remove cancers on both lungs, his tumorous

tongue, his lower jaw and all his teeth.

The 48-year-old former butcher and hears driver now weighs slightly more than 100 pounds—60 pounds under his normal weight—under his normal food, and needs to gulp his food, such as yogurt or mashed

potatoes, whole. "My only pleasures now are to eat a little and to light up a cigarette," Gourlain explains over the telephone, struggling to form his words with what's left of his tongue and mouth. "I daydream about eating a good steak, but I can't."

The longtime two-pack-a-day smoker, now down to between 10 and 20 brown tobacco Gauloises a day, has made legal history in France by suing the cigarettes maker, the former state-owned tobacco giant SEITA, and demanding more than \$500,000 in damages. "I have lost everything with this disease: my job, my

home, my friends," said Gourlain, who lives in a Loire Valley village with his wife, Lucette, a former secretary, and their two sons. "I no longer have any relations with my wife. She stays with me because she is my wife, but it's hard to live with a fellow like me."

The reaction to Gourlain's ground-breaking lawsuit says a lot about the complex relationship between the French and tobacco. The suit, inspired by similar actions in the United States, is being handled by the attorney of the National Committee Against Smoking. But many French are vehemently opposed to it.

"People have been writing us anonymous letters saying we should assume our responsibilities, that we're suing just

to get money," said Lucette Gourlain, who says she still loves her husband.

Some letters complain that Gourlain, who was fired from his job as a hears driver when his smoking-related health problems kept him away from work for 10 months, then lost his house when his own hears venture failed, is too much of a drain on France's state-financed health system.

"No one forced me to smoke," Gourlain readily admits. "But they are selling death, and it is very profitable for the state."

In France, smoking is one supremely touchy area where the law, though in some ways more advanced than that of many other countries, runs smack into widespread habits

and a stubborn sense of individual rights, and where interests of the state and public health aren't always identical.

After all, until SEITA was privatized in 1995, the government itself was France's sole legal tobacco merchant. According to SEITA officials, 76 percent of the retail cost of a pack of cigarettes is tax, and cigarette sales fill tax coffers with the equivalent of more than \$11 billion yearly.

In contrast to such enormous sums, says the French National Committee Against Smoking, the amounts spent to educate people about tobacco's dangers are pitiful: less than \$400,000 a year, or about 1 percent of what the state of Arizona alone spends.

"This is David against Goliath," said Philippe Har-

ant of the Versailles-based committee.

About 60,000 Frenchmen and Frenchwomen die each year from cancer and other smoking-related ailments.

Unlike in the United States, there is no age limit in France to bar minors from purchasing tobacco. Gourlain, in fact, began smoking at 13.

Cigarette sales dropped by 9.5 percent in the first five years of the 1990s. But a new generation of consumers is on the way. Surveys show French boys and girls to be the heaviest smokers in the European Union. By age 18, 58 percent smoke.

A law passed six years ago made smoking illegal in cafes, public workplaces, restau-



Continued on page 2

Running the world with a religious aim

By Manal Omar
Special to The Star

IN THE movie *Forest Gump*, the main character played by Tom Hanks only finds inner peace when he abruptly starts running. His journey leads him across the United States, gaining him a number of followers, each assuming their own reasons for his marathon. The simple reason that he enjoyed it, however, was

overlooked.

A native of France, Jamel Balhi keeps that reason as the center of all his journeys. His joy of running has made him a citizen of the world. As a child, Balhi took pleasure in running long distances and found his own sense of peace. Today, he has run across 85 countries, including the United States and Australia.

"I love to run because I can be free. I choose the paths that I follow. I want to meet people and to see all different types of countries. It is a very good way to learn. It is like going to school everyday," Balhi told *The Star*.

A look through his scrapbook journey one is left in amazement. The pictures tell a thousand words of the adventures Balhi experienced on each of his trips. In one photo, Balhi is running on a bridge in China surrounded by people riding their bikes on their daily commute. In another breathtaking picture, Balhi struggles as he runs up a path with the Scottish mountains in the background. Each picture shares in common the passion Balhi possesses to run, whether it be amongst the desert in Arizona or side by side with the trolleys in San Francisco.

Ayers Rack
Australia



Beijing, China

Currently, Balhi has embarked on a new running expedition. Each trip he runs he sets a specific objective to fulfill. In this journey Balhi aims to link every religious city in the world. On May 15, 1996 Balhi began his journey when he ran out of Paris. He ran from Lourdes in South of France then to Nice, Rome, Albania, Macedonia, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and recently he has arrived in Jordan. The final place he hopes to end his religious journey is Lhasa in Tibet.

The journey is sponsored by Bermudes, a French outdoor equipment company. In addition, Balhi is on a mission from UNESCO to search for athletic clubs who need equipment and other financial aid. UNESCO's program provides sports equipment, clothes, and other necessities to international sports clubs in need. In order to meet his target date for completion, Balhi must run 65 kilometers a day.

In the past, each challenge Balhi has taken, has served to teach him a new lesson. However, the current journey proves to combine the ethical and material aspects of his love of running since his goal is to reach all the religious cities in the world. "I am quite overwhelmed by this trip because it's a religious journey. I've met people from all religions and all stature, from everyday people in the street, to the Pope in Rome."

The experience of meeting religious people is only part of the reward. Traveling on foot no doubt poses adventure as well as the element of danger. One of the greatest obstacles Balhi encounters is nature itself, since a night filled with rain is a night of discomfort. "Every night I have to find a new place to sleep. I cannot run more than 85 kilometers, so sometimes I find myself in the middle of nowhere with no place to sleep. The world was designed for fast travel, I usually like to sleep in the countryside, in a church, or a mosque. Sometimes I have to sleep in the street," explained Balhi.

One of the main aspects Balhi emphasizes is that he loves to run. This passion has provided him with the gift of seeing the world and its people. In addition, Balhi has developed an inside view about the



Lanzhou, China

different people of the world. During his trips, many people offer hospitality. "They offer hospitality because they are curious. Most people have a boring routine life, so when I come across their village they like to receive me because I break that routine. People give us what we give to them. They are like a mirror," states the runner.

At the same time, Balhi's current journey has given him an inside view of religion and helped develop his own philosophy. In essence a freelance religious person, Balhi creates his own form of religion by combining a bit of them all. "I'm traveling across the world and I have seen a lot in common. The bad thing is that people turn religion into something severe. People not only believe in God, but sometimes they want to be God."

During his stay in Jordan, Balhi expresses pleasure to see the hospitality of the people. His next destination is Saudi Arabia where he hopes to get as close to Mecca as possible. With 8,000 kilometers to go, Balhi looks at each day

with eagerness. Once he arrives in Lhasa, Tibet he will board a plane back to Paris. But Paris is just another stopover. After recuperating from his religious run, Balhi will fly off to Alaska where he plans to make it across the continents to Patagonia, the most southern tip of Latin America.

"Everyday is a lesson. Each time I meet someone I can never meet again." No doubt each person Balhi meets will never forget the Frenchman who loved to run. ■



A small village in Tibet

Charges of Jordanian visas to Britons go down

THE PRICE of visas for British tourists entering Jordan will now go down from £72 to £27. The cost of a multiple entry tourist visa has also been reduced, from £141 to £51. The decision was reversed by the Ministry of Interior.

Since December, British visitors had been charged the higher rate if they applied for a visa at the Jordanian embassy in London in advance of their holiday.

Tour operators in London have been calling for the reduction so as to increase British tourists to Jordan. It was the *London-based Daily Telegraph* that first published the report about the steep prices.

Jim Smith, managing director of the Jordan specialist Jasmun Tours in London, said "I don't think there's any doubt—the cost was dropped because of *The Daily Telegraph* report."

"When the price rise was announced, I told the Jordanians that this is the last thing we need. I said they have shot themselves in the foot. I have a lot of sympathy for the Jordanians but this was tactless—so now they have responded."

JEA threatens action if memo is not implemented

Continued from page 1

The committee, if formed, could certainly help smooth the developing tense situation between the engineers and the government.

In today's meeting the JEA council will call for the adoption of a series of confrontational actions. On the agenda are strikes, rallies and sit-ins.

"It is not our desire to have a confrontation with the government, it is them who are forcing us to consider such options," said Abu Ghaidia.

The deputy secretary general of the JEA, Ali Abu Al Sukar, said that "the government is losing its credibility among popular institutions and unions, and will create an atmosphere of distrust." He added that "we have given the government enough time, the agreement

has to be implemented, we are not going to negotiate again on what has been agreed upon."

The JEA council is holding extensive talks with members of the association for today's meeting, which is expected to be steamy.

"The engineers are on alert, they have lost patience," Abu Al Sukar said.

Now the ball is in the government's court to push through the agreement and avoid tension with the JEA which may extend to other associations which also signed memorandums of understanding with the government. These include the doctors, pharmacists, agronomists, dentists and geologists.

A way out has to be found. The country can't afford to experience another bout of industrial actions. ■

Smoker's lawsuit ignites complex

Continued from page 1

tants, train stations and other closed places, except for designated areas. But from platforms in the Paris subway to the canteen in Paris' Palace of Justice, where judges and police officials meet for lunch and snacks, the French puff away regardless.

The designated area for nonsmokers in a restaurant may be a little corner by the toilet, or there may be none at all.

Non-lumecur, worried about the risks of "passive smoking" are frequently dismissed as anti-social pests or fanatics. Last year, one 29-year-old Frenchman, who suffers from allergies, uses an inhaler and can't stand to be around cigarette smoke, threatened to take legal action unless management stopped his 12 co-workers in an air freight company from smoking in the office they shared at Charles de Gaulle Airport north of Paris.

The 1991 law notwithstanding, the unhappy employee, Jean-Luc Michel, was fired for, in management's words, having "systematically denigrated his co-workers" and "demonstrated a lack of respect for company hierarchy."

The National League for the Rights of Nonsmokers cites numerous similar cases. In November, French railways were slapped with a lawsuit for not doing more to stop passengers from

smoking in a Lyon train station.

The first warnings on French cigarette packs—that "abuse" of the contents was "dangerous"—were mandated in 1976 under France's first anti-tobacco law, which also banned advertising of the product. In 1991, the new law required cigarettes sold in France to carry the notice: "Seriously harms health."

SEITA maintains that such warnings are sufficient for consumers to know the risks, and that it has obeyed the laws in force. But the cigarette maker evokes a more subtle cultural principle in disclaiming any liability for what happened to Gourlain.

In the French tradition, people assume (legal) responsibility for what they do. SEITA spokeswoman Aneta

Lazerevic said. Francis Caballero, the anti-smoking committee lawyer who is representing Gourlain and family members of another Calvados smoker, Suzanne Berger, who died of lung cancer in October at age 35, counters that both cancer victims were hooked on cigarettes long before the warnings went on the packs.

The plaintiffs' lawsuits are based on a French law that holds a manufacturer responsible if his product is "inherently dangerous." Vaguely worded warnings on the packs aren't enough, Caballero contends.

If he wins, Gourlain says he wants to give damages awarded him to a Paris-area cancer institute where he was treated. "I'm not fighting for me. For me, it's over," he says. ■

Activist monitors Palestinian human rights abuses

Continued from page 1

Eid was never charged with a crime, or told formally why he was being held. Eventually, he was released, but was told, "You should make your tongue shorter."

None of it, however, has succeeded in silencing him. "My tongue will grow longer," he said. "I will not be quiet."

Eid, who lives in the run-

down Palestinian refugee camp of Shuafat near Jerusalem, is a straightforward, outspoken man. He is a Muslim, but one who is not particularly devout. Last week, as he interviewed the family of Fayed Qumsieh, he ate and drank and smoked, despite the strictures of the holy days of Ramadan. He appears to be perpetually in a hurry, constantly jumping into his little white car and careening recklessly off through the Israeli checkpoints to his next appointment.

He also appears to be fully at home neither with Palestinians nor Israelis.

"In the beginning, many Palestinians contacted me to say that when I am criticizing the Authority, I should do it in a positive way," he said. "But if somebody is tortured to death in a Palestinian jail, how can I say that in a positive way? Others said to me that the Authority was new, and I should give it a chance. But today, most of the people in Palestinian society already agree that these human rights violations are becoming policy." ■

JORDAN TODAY
JOURNAL OF CULTURE, HISTORY, ARTS
JANUARY 1997

The Rituals of Ramadan

January Issue
For More Information Call 652380

The Star
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BRITISH EMBASSY
ANNUAL NOTICE TO ALL BRITISH CITIZENS LIVING IN JORDAN

Have you registered with the British Embassy? If you are a British citizen and live in Jordan, please contact the British Embassy, Consular Section, in order to obtain a registration form.

If you have registered during 1996, please confirm your continuing presence in Jordan by re-registering as soon as possible. Please also notify the Consular Section about any changes of address and/or telephone number. Such confirmation is in the interest of all British nationals in Jordan.

If names are not re-registered within three months the Embassy will be obliged to consider that those concerned have left the country. The names will accordingly be deleted from the register.

If you are a citizen of a Commonwealth country which does not have an Embassy or Consulate in Jordan, please ask the British Embassy, Consular Section, about registration formalities.

The British Embassy is located in Abdoun, near the Orthodox Club, Telephone 623100. The Post Office Box Number is 87. The consulate is open from Sunday to Thursday 08:30-12:30 hours.

ARABESQUE Café

Shuafat, near Jerusalem
Middle East Bank Building, Tel. 698005

Kick the Habit! Stop Smoking!

Government wins debate on single vote system

Continued from page 1

But pro-government deputies, the centrists and deputy ministers forged a strong coalition against the opposition stressing that the one-man-one-vote formula is the most ideal. They explained that it is a just and fair law that serves the interest of the country and establishes equality among the people of the Kingdom.

Al Stoor, told *The Star* that the majority of deputies approved the temporary electoral law, which means simply the acceptance of the single vote as an electoral system.

Al Stoor stressed that the coming elections will be held on their constitutional time denying that there is any intention to extend the term of the current ordinary session of the House.

Deputy Farah Al-Rabadi said the one-man-one-vote law is suitable adding that any negative aspects in the law can be avoided in the future when the government presents a new draft law as promised.

Similarly independent Islamic deputy, Ahmed Al-Kassasbeh, said that while the temporary election law is not the best, it can be passed until a new electoral law is introduced. Al-Kassasbeh said that rejecting this law would cause a "constitutional vacuum."

But IAF deputy, Mohammad Oweidah called for a no-confidence vote in the Kabarti government because he maintained that it did not fulfill its promise to submit a new electoral law.

But with such disputes, the House started to lose its momentum as deputies seem to be preoccupied with the coming elections, which Mr. Stoor confirmed that they will be held by the end of this year in November.

After getting the approval of the Lower House, the law will be submitted to the Upper House of Parliament for ratification then it will be given the Royal seal of approval. The House will end its session on 19 March. ■

CLASSIFIEDS

Social survey

● The University of Bologna in Italy is looking for every foreign student (non-Italian) who graduated in Bologna from 1945. An important social research has been started and a questionnaire will be sent to the graduates contacted. All foreign graduates are kindly asked to write their current address to: (Friends or relatives who know useful information are asked to write to: Osservatorio Statistico, Dipartimento di Scienze Statistiche "P. Fortunati", Università di Bologna, via Belle Arti 41, 40126 Bologna, BO, ITALIA

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JORDAN

WEEK



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Strange! Have the poor increased or is it that the rich are fewer??



King recuperates after minor surgery
His Majesty King Hussein has left the hospital sound and well after having a successful minor surgery on his knee last Saturday. An arthroscopic surgery, which was performed at Al Hussein Medical Center, was aimed at removing a cartilage found in the king's left knee which, he said, caused severe pain and malfunction in the right knee caused by the Umra pilgrimage. The king received many cables and phone calls from leaders of Arab states and Jordanian officials wishing him a speedy recovery and good health.

Cabinet reshuffle could be in offing
A ministerial reshuffle could take place next month according to high level sources. Some even say that a reshuffle has already been cooked up so to speak. It is even said that up to eight ministerial portfolios will change hands. The purpose of the reshuffle is to start preparations for the coming elections of the Lower House. The Prime Minister, Abdel Karim Al Kabarti, is still studying the issue. The prime minister wants to increase further the number of Lower House deputies in his government. Although Islamic Action Front deputy, Dr. Abdallah Al Akaileh has been rumored as one of those who would join the next government, the IAF had said on many occasions that it would not join the government.

Begging in style!
Begging on the streets has always been a problem in Jordan. However, a very interesting case was reported earlier of beggars with cellular phones. For the first time in Amman begging has become a full-time profession. Further, the culprits, posing as people who were hard up, were conducting each other by the cellular, obviously to see how business was going in their particular areas. Hum! What should we say to that, good hunting may be, but something that should certainly not be encouraged. However, hot on their heels were officials from the Ministry of Social Development. They said that 221 people were caught begging but pointed out that most of these took on this activity as a profession. Officials said that the people who were really in need were sent to the National Aid Fund for help.

Toeing the line! Well may be
The weeklies are under fire again. This time it is from non other than the Prime Minister, Abdel Karim Al Kabarti and the Lower House of Parliament. The accusations levelled are nearly as always the same: the weekly press is too sensational and indulges in a lot of scandal. They would be right too, our beloved weeklies are essentially too scandalous for Jordanian moral tastes and public decency, yet in all fairness, people argue that they have a lot of news items and some of the bits are good too. However, this is really a debatable point, as many deputies have pointed out. Most weeklies serve only to anger many. This would be the case as far as deputies are concerned. An obvious example is that of the satirical weekly *Abd Rabbo*. Its editor in chief, Omar Al Nadi, has been taken into custody because of what is being termed as slandering a minister and a deputy. He was released later. However, Youssef Ghishan, one of the editors and who calls himself the "greater pirate" has been put in his place.

Hammering the weekly press could really be a turning point in the fortunes of the relations between the government and the Lower House. Whilst I would not go as far as to term it as turning swords into plowshares, however, hammering the yellow press could bring them closer to seeing eye to eye. The prime minister promised that he will deal with the problem quickly. But it is hard to imagine just how will Mr. Kabarti act. There is first the Press and Publication Law, that of course could be tightened at the expense of the wrath of libertarians or he could continue to use the threat of prison as a deterrent. Whatever the case things don't look too bright for the Jordanian press this week. I suppose that toeing the line could be the best way in these murky times.

Writers up in arms
The anger of writers and intellectuals in this country is refusing to go. They are levied with the Minister of Culture, Dr. Ahmed Al Qudah for sticking to his guns and maintaining that cultural seminars and lectures in the country need prior permission from the ministry. However, the Writers Association are sticking to his guns also, and say that they are prepared to do whatever is necessary to reverse the ministerial decision. As a first step they will be demonstrating outside Parliament to try and persuade deputies to bring a no-confidence vote in the minister.

Going, going, gone
We've always maintained that quite a lot of weeklies will go down under. This is not a self-righteous remark, but it is a matter of fact. Over the past couple of years some weeklies quietly folded, with finances being the main reason. The latest to go however, is *Sawt Al Arab*, the effervescent weekly that had a very short shelf-life. Last week it simply folded up. What is worse is the manner in which it surrendered. Its editor in chief, Mohammad Abu Ajamieh was virtually thrown out of the premises by the landlord for failing to pay his past arrears of JD 2200 according to *Al Haddath*. What is worse is that journalists in the weekly have not been paid either. Anger is not the word to describe what they feel, they are thinking of taking the editor in chief to court.

Unions continue to be angry
It seems that unions continue to be angry about the new unitary system that was adopted last week. Some unionists argue that "adopted" is more of an under-statement. More argue that it was the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) like it was the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) that forced unitary system down their throats, despite the fact that it was accepted by 14 unions. Further, the administrative councils of the Union of Land Transport, General Services and Mechanics point out that their representatives had no right to vote for the adoption of the unitary system. Eight unions initially expressed dismay at the system that was proposed by to contest the decision in court if it was necessary. However, they point out that they are not against the system in principle, but that it should be drawn out by the representatives of all unions. One of the strongest opponents of the present system is the Banking Union which says that the federation's decision is dangerous and its method is another way to curtail worker's rights.



His Majesty King Hussein, performing the ritual of Umra in Mecca, last Thursday. The King flew to Madina where he prayed at the Prophet Muhammad's Mosque. Accompanied by members of the Royal Family, Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabarti, Royal Court Chief Awad Al Khasawneh and other officials, he then went to Mecca to perform Umra. Later on His Majesty met with King Faisal of Saudi Arabia where a visit was scheduled for the Saudi Foreign Minister to visit Jordan. He will be coming to this country shortly after Eid Al Fitr.

Draft law on alcohol creates much controversy in Lower House

AMMAN (Star)—First, it was television, now it's alcohol's turn to take a beating from Parliament. While hewing out the Lower House Legal Committee since 1992, the draft law to ban alcohol was eventually passed to Lower Speaker Saad Hayel Al Sroor. It is now up to him to put it on the agenda of the House for full discussion. The draft law has created much controversy. It seems to have certainly split the deputies, amongst those for banning alcohol and those who are against it. As expected the Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputies are leading the campaign. The head of the Legal Committee, IAF deputy Ibrahim Zaid Al Kilani, says that it is a must to ban the drinking of alcohol in this country as Jordan is an Islamic state. Similarly Abd Al Aziz Jaber, Hamza Mansour and Theil Anees, all adopted the same tone of Islamic argument. They stated that as an Islamic state, as enshrined by the Constitution, it was *haram* to allow the sale and drinking of alcohol. Al Kilani was optimistic that the draft law would be passed because the deputies will face an election this year and most of their constituents are against alcohol. But despite the strong call for the ban, the draft law however, stated that such a ban



Abu Zaid



Al Rawahdeh

should only be imposed on Muslims and not Christians and that it should not be imposed on such sectors that attract tourism. However, he pointed out that it would be up to the government to find a way to implement the law. Deputy Tawjan Faisal was among the first to criticize the draft law, pointing out its impracticalities. She asked who would the law apply to, and would it be fair to apply it on some shops, while others get away scot free. She pointed out that if Christians are the ones to trade in spirits then they would be the ones to profit in a very lucrative business and that would create divisions within society.

But Faisal was angry with Islamists on what she regarded as a fundamental point. She said that Islamists had no right to give such a narrow interpretation of the Jordanian constitution. She said that while it was true that Islam is officially the religion of state, the interpretation should not be taken literally, especially concerning its political, economic and social policies.

Intrigue surrounds case as defendant recants confession

AMMAN (Star)—The trial of the father who allegedly poisoned his two children last September is again capturing the attention of the Jordanian public, especially since the father has denied, in court, his earlier confession. During police interrogations, Mazen Al Masri confessed to poisoning his two children, Hani, 6, and Haneen, 9. He described how he gave cyanide tablets to his children to take orally. He admitted that he brought the lethal tablets from Canada. But during his trial before a criminal court, which began in December, Al Masri recanted his previous confession, bringing the case again into the limelight, especially when defence lawyer Ahmad Najdawi declared that he is confident of Al Masri's innocence. Najdawi is planning to call 20 witnesses to the stand to prove his point. The Greater Criminal Court met last Sunday to listen to the testimony of Attorney General Fathi Al Rifai. He testified that Al Masri had told him about the "cyanide" even before it was pinpointed as the cause of death by the homicide laboratory. He said Al Masri told him that his children's digestive tracts were clear of cyanide. Rifai said that he was asked by Al Masri about the court's sentence. It was proved that he was the killer. The Attorney General told him that sentencing was the sole authority of the court. Rifai said Al Masri had directly admitted to poisoning his two children. Rifai added that until his confession, there were no charges filed against Al Masri. After the famous confession, Al Masri's wife Heyam revealed that her husband had attempted to kill the children once before. She told investigators that a month and a half before the crime took place the father had tried to kill his children by releasing cooking gas, claiming that he has moved from the kitchen into their room.

During Sunday's session, defence lawyer Najdawi cross-examined Rifai. Najdawi asked if Al Masri was tortured or terrorized during the interrogations. Rifai said "the suspect was not subjected to any kind of torture." He also denied that the "suspect was in a situation of complete psychiatric conditions" during cross-examinations. Najdawi asked the Attorney General about reasons for suspicion on which the authorities based their arrest of Al Masri. According to Rifai the detectives became certain that the killer is from inside the household. He added that the defendant and his wife had left their home at 10:30 am, as registered in the case file. The mother returned home at 7:10 and found the victims unconscious. A neighbor, Rifai continued, confirmed that no-one had entered or left the building since the parents left their apartment. He added that the defendant was the last one to lock the apartment's door, while the wife was waiting in the car. "We excluded the mother as a suspect because she left the house before Mazen," Rifai added. He stressed that the defendant was in normal psychological condition when he committed the murder. At the end of Sunday's session, the Court decided to call the prosecutor general of the Greater Criminal Court to testify in the next session which will be held this Tuesday.

Mheissen meets Indian foreign minister

JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR to India Hisham Mheissen met last Wednesday with the Indian Foreign Minister and delivered to him a written invitation from Jordanian Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabarti to visit Jordan. The Indian Foreign Minister affirmed that exchanging visits between Jordanian and Indian senior officials boost bilateral relations. The Indian official further hailed Jordan's, particularly His Majesty King Hussein's, active role in safeguarding the peace process. The two sides also discussed the increasingly improving bilateral relations in the economic and political domains.

Pentagon official: Saddam never stopped considering another invasion!

US strategy in the Gulf region rests on keeping the Gulf states, and the rest of the world, suspicious and weary of Iraq and Iran—two countries with which the United States has conflicts. With Madeline Albright sworn in as secretary of state the bet is that she will increase the pressure on these countries with the aim of consolidating US hegemony in the Gulf region. This week the Voice of America (VOA) quoted an unnamed senior US military official as saying that Iraq continues to rebuild its armed forces with smuggled spareparts and equipment. The Pentagon official added that Iraq is now capable of easily over-running Kuwait again if an attack was well-planned. It is ludicrous to believe, but according to the senior official president Saddam Hussein has never stopped considering another invasion of Kuwait. The hilarious thing is that according to the senior official, "Iraq is capable of re-taking Kuwait with a single division of troops in one night—provided it moved when there were no US ground forces in the area." The source told VOA that Iraq ground troops have increased over the last two months. He said smuggling of spareparts through Syria, Jordan and Turkey has allowed the Iraqi air force to run as many as 100 training flights per night. He said two Iraqi jets briefly penetrated the expanded no-fly zone in the southern part of the country about a week ago. The senior official said he was not saying a new invasion is imminent—but that Saddam Hussein may be feeling more confident following his successful thrust into the Kurdish north last August, and the recent UN decision allowing Iraq to resume selling oil. The official, who is involved in top-level US military planning in the Middle East, said Kuwait's four-brigades of troops are in a poor state of readiness, and that Iraq could move in virtually unopposed if US aircraft in the region were grounded by bad weather. The official told VOA that Saddam Hussein does not appear to be in any danger of losing control despite the attack against his son Uday on the streets of Baghdad December 12th. He said US officials have been told that Uday Hussein is semi-paralyzed with one or two bullets lodged in his spine, and could lose a leg to gangrene. He said American officials have learned from what he termed "a good source" that Saddam has placed his wife under house arrest for unknown reasons.

Beilin: Israel should get out of South Lebanon

Yossi Beilin is starting his campaign to take over leadership of the Labor Party of Israel with earnest. He has signed a document with the rival Likud Party addressing the main points of agreement between the two main blocs with regard to the final status negotiations with the Palestinians—much to the dismay of Beilin's rival Ehud Barak. Now Beilin is stealing the lights again from Barak by calling for an immediate and unilateral Israeli withdrawal out of South Lebanon. "We have turned into hostages in Lebanon," Beilin was quoted by the *Jerusalem Post* on Wednesday. "Our soldiers have turned into sitting targets for Hizbullah. We need to get out of Lebanon unilaterally with the aid of a third party." Beilin was speaking at a seminar at Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies. He said that a written agreement with Beirut would never be allowed by Syria, the de-facto ruler in Lebanon, because Damascus wanted to use guerrilla attacks against Israel as pressure tactic. He also questioned Syria's seriousness about peace with Israel, adding Syrian President Hafez Assad feared normalization. Beilin said Damascus was blocking any Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon because it used Israeli occupation there as a legitimization for their troops presence in Lebanon. "We need the guns to get out of there," he said. He said the international border [with Lebanon] could be like a "zipper," which could be opened for the Israeli army action and then closed in times of tranquility. Beilin also said Israel had to stop pointing to Iran as Israel's arch enemy and actually seek to renew relations with Tehran. He said Iranian need for investments in its retarded gas industries could be used as a pressure tactic led by the United States to get Iran to abandon its efforts to reach nuclear capability.

Kuwaiti officers beat Jordanian prisoners

Continued from page 1
most had to be transferred to hospital. The violations took place during the Holy month of Ramadan, when the prisoners were gathered after taking their *Iftar* meal. Kuwaiti officers ordered them to raise up their hands and stay in the cold weather for more than three hours. Some of the prisoners are old (between 60-70 years). Others have been diseases as a result of their long-term confinement. It was claimed that the officers robbed the prisoners of their clothes, books and money. These prisoners were already convicted by the Kuwaiti State Security Court for long-term sentences.

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LURIE'S WORLD



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Our Say...

Horror in wing 9 in Kuwait

EVENTS OF nightmarish proportions are taking place in wing 9 in Kuwait's central prison. During the last week special Kuwaiti forces have barged into the wing, where at least 34 Jordanians are being held since 1991, and began beating, torturing and humiliating inmates. At least four prisoners were taken to hospital suffering from broken ribs and various injuries.

The soldiers stripped the prisoners naked, confiscated their clothes, money and other belongings before leaving them. Those who survived the beatings were left to nights without clothing and most have contracted diseases.

Not in the most notorious dictatorships could such inhumane treatment of prisoners take place. The ill-fated Jordanians are among at least 350 Arab nationals who have been rotting in Kuwaiti jails since the emirate's liberation from Iraqi occupation more than six years ago.

Last week's rampage appears to have come as a result of appeals by families of prisoners to the Emir of Kuwait to free their relatives, who according to some reports include some women.

Such an unjustified attack against defenseless prisoners can only be regarded as an atrocity and a violation of international conventions. Only recently has the ICRC been successful in arranging for a special visit by relatives to Kuwait where the prisoners were allowed to see their families for a short while.

Most prisoners have been convicted of collaborating with the Iraqis. They include journalists who had worked for an Iraqi newspaper published in Kuwait during the occupation.

But no charge can justify the violation of prisoners' human rights in such a horrible way. The prisoners were beaten up and subjected to verbal abuse. Some are in a terrible psychological state of mind, fearing for their lives.

There is no doubt that those behind such cowardly acts do not represent the majority of Kuwaitis, who would not condone such practices that are in violation of Muslim, Arab and human values. The Gulf crisis has had many victims, but it is time that this wound is allowed to heal.

We are surprised that not enough international and Arab effort is being done to end the plight of the 34 Jordanian prisoners, and others, in wing 9. Our government should adopt their cause, just as it has adopted the cause of Jordanians in Israeli prisons. The inhumane treatment of Jordanians in Kuwaiti prisons is an affront to all of us here in Jordan.

Our government should bring pressure to bear on Kuwait to reveal the whereabouts of at least 10 Jordanians who have gone missing since Kuwait's liberation. It should also demand the immediate release of more than 20 Jordanians who have been under incarceration in Kuwait without charge or trial.

Our government should work with the UN, Amnesty International and the ICRC to publicize the plight of Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait. It is ironic that Kuwait should solicit the help of the international community to locate Kuwaitis gone missing in Iraq when it now stands guilty of abusing prisoners and is refusing to cooperate with families who are looking for their missing relatives in Kuwait. ■



An Israeli policeman trying to force one of the members of Al Jahalin tribe off his land while other members of the same tribe are seen lying injured on the ground last Monday near Abu Dees area where Israel is seeking to expand the Maaleh Adomim settlement.

Israeli insanity Jewish terrorism against the Palestinians

By Ali Baghdadi

THE CHARACTERIZATION of Noam Friedman, who last Christmas fired his Israeli Army assault rifle at Palestinian shoppers in a crowded Hebron market, is an "unbalanced" young man, should not come as a surprise to anyone. The world has heard this version of the story as told by Israeli officials many times earlier. Jewish murderers of unarmed Palestinian civilians were all described as deranged individuals in need for psychiatric treatment. Israeli courts usually give them lenient sentences, and shortly after they are released and pardoned.

In 1994 Baruch Goldstein entered a hall in the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, and murdered 29 Muslim worshippers kneeling down in prayer before being killed by angry survivors of the ugly massacre. The Israeli army provided the automatic assault rifle and the bullets.

In 1993 Yoram Skolnick shot dead a bound Palestinian. Soon Mr Skolnick who was described as disturbed individual will be set free and given a new opportunity to murder more innocent Palestinians.

In 1992 four members of "Kahane" group threw a hand grenade into a meat market in Jerusalem killing and wounding several Palestinians. As usual, the men will be released before their 15-year term sentence is over.

In 1990 Israeli army reservist Ami Popper shot and murdered seven Palestinian workers waiting at a crossroads.

In 1984 David Ben Simol fired a Lau rocket into a bus



carrying Palestinian laborers. Eleven men were killed or injured. The so-called "insane" man was released last year having served part of his sentence.

In 1983 three members of the "Jewish underground" opened fire at the Islamic University in Hebron killing three students. The "insane" murderers were later pardoned.

In 1982 Allen Goodman entered Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and opened fire at Muslim worshippers.



Israeli soldiers firing at Palestinians

Earlier, an Australian Jewish immigrant set fire to Al Aqsa Mosque, Islamic historical treasures that cannot be replaced were humed.

Those are only a few examples of a long list of Israeli Jews who were labeled by the Israeli government as "disturbed," "unbalanced" or "insane" for murdering Palestinians and desecrating Muslim shrines. Their crimes were dismissed by the Zionist media as the acts of isolated loners who were despised and rejected. However, the great number of Jews, in Israel and abroad, describe these men as "heroes" who rejected the law of man and obeyed a commandment of the Torah.

When he was asked why he fired into the crowd of Palestinians, Friedman who is described as insane reiterated the same biblical episode cited by religious leaders who oppose Israeli troop redeployment from most of Hebron as agreed to by the Oslo agreements. "Abraham bought the Cave of the Patriarchs for 400 shekels of silver... No one will return it."

The Israeli justice system is also "insane." Three Israeli soldiers who recently admitted killing a Palestinian motorist

were fined one "agora"—one third of a cent—and released.

Last year, the Israeli Supreme Court issued a ruling allowing the use of torture in interrogation of Palestinian prisoners, a violation of the Geneva agreements.

The Israeli leaders and generals who, among their endless crimes, ordered the bombardment of the village of Qana in southern Lebanon are also insane.

The massacre resulted in the killing of over 100 men, women, and children who took refuge in the UN compound to escape Israeli shelling.

The Israeli society that sanctions these crimes and describes

Goldstein as a saint also erected a memorial by his grave in Hebron in his honor is also insane.

Zionist Jews in America who make pilgrimage to the grave of Goldstein to offer their prayers and donations as a tribute to his "courage, sacrifice and dedication" are insane.

Unless this phenomena of insanity is broken, and Israel ceases to exist as a Zionist state based on insanity, the Middle East will not enjoy peace. ■

Israeli soldiers firing at Palestinians

Sun shining down under

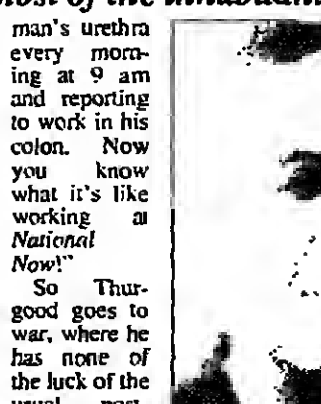
For those of us who spent the Gulf War in Washington, Farley evokes the crazy-seriousness of those days, the means by which the media were mobilized behind the American forces and the fundamental unconcern for faraway events shown by most of the inhabitants of America's capital.

My Favorite War, By Christopher John Farley, Grants Books, \$12
Reviewed by Peter Stothard

THURGOOD BRINKMAN is a successful Washingtonian black male who is not quite successful enough. He is a journalist but not on *The Washington Post*; he is an Ivy League graduate whose contemporaries are already top television producers or fashionable Prozac novelists. He wants to be a Hemingway or a Raymond Carver but instead he writes "trend features" for the *National Now!*, a paper bearing certain similarities to America's only mass-market national daily, *USA Today*.

The year is 1991 and the biggest black success in Washington is General Luther Point, a figure bearing equally certain similarities to General Colin Powell. It seems for a while as though the Gulf War is going to give Thurgood his big break. Just when "the youthful emerald of his salad days" was becoming an ugly jealous green, he gets the chance to go to Dahrn with Sojourner Truth Zapader, the *Post*'s star female black columnist.

He first jibes at the idea of being Ms Zapader's assistant and researcher: "How come it's always the black man who's asked to take two steps down to take a step up?" But then he contemplates his part in the post-one-night-stand pregnancy of his sister's boyfriend's sister. His white housemates, led by a self-styled presidential speechwriter, have run up massive bills and left him with the landlady. And then there is his *National Now!* job. "Imagine a coughing, wheezing wine with a mucus-filled nose, open skin sores and syphilis. Now imagine this man is 33 stories tall. Now imagine crawling into this



Farley

man's urethra every morning at 9 am and reporting to work in his colon. Now you know what it's like working at *National Now!*"

So Thurgood goes to war, where he has none of the luck of the usual post-Scoop fictional misfits. He "exchanges"

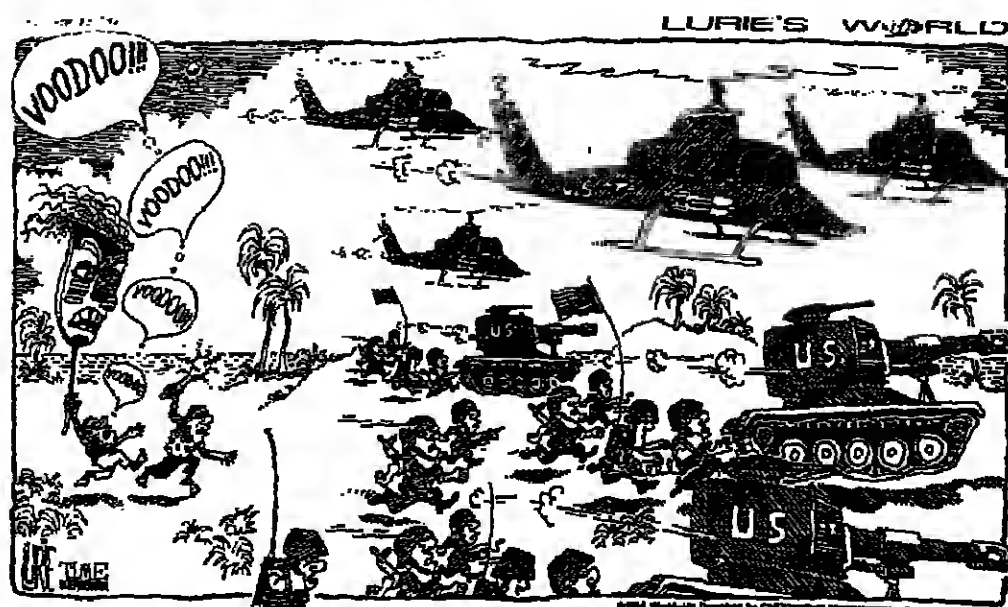
United States imprisonment in a Saudi hotel room for Iraqi imprisonment in a Baghdad hotel room and never manages to file a story. The only advantage he gains during the birth of George Bush's New World Order is that his successful contemporaries sink back to his own low level of achievement.

After a brush with a friendly landmine our hero is flown back home to find the *National*

It is a journalist's novel—satirical episodic and sketchily characterised—which is also about journalists. Reporters fight over scarce computer screens. John Lennon on the information, superhighway. Feature writers try vainly to turn some triviality that happened to the Editor into a style story for the zeitgeist.

In the same way it is a novel of and about the young, black American middle class. Thurgood's parents had sweating white kids to mow their lawn. They gage their kids "none of that I'm pathological, you're pathological, we-all know-how-the-cagebird-sings bullshit that the media loves to see in black families." However low Thurgood's writing career goes, he knows that his mother will always have this application forms ready for law school. ■

The Times



"No one informed us they'd be using unconventional weapons!!!"

Middle East Beat by Khairi Janbe Sudan

ONCE AGAIN, and in the Arab world, the lexicon of terminology is being applied to define the future of Sudan. We hear terms such as Balkanization, Palestinization, Lebanonization, Somaliaization being thrown around. This is to warn the supporters of a united Sudan of the threat to its unity, and provide more ideas to the supposed, enemies of the country on how to divide it intelligently.

A war that has been going on for decades is still without a solution, and a country with a size larger than that of Europe is still without an identity. What is still being read by our children in school textbooks, is that Sudan is a fraternal Arab and Islamic country that remains the breadbasket for the region, and a symbol of multi-cultural coexistence.

One does not wish to pass an academic judgment but prefers to put it in terms of wishful thinking that at least in books, the situation in Sudan reflects our confidence that the future will still be connected to the glories of the past despite the aberrations of the present.

If we decide as Arabs and Muslims to allow ourselves the luxury of leaping qualitatively into the unknown, with the feeling that events would sort themselves out eventually, then we might just as well do nothing and mentally nourish ourselves for the sedate comfort that history will be on our side.

It has become hard to speak of an Arab foreign policy, for fear of aiming pot shots at the United Arab Forum—Arab League. There is no doubt that this unifying edifice, our bargaining counter, and window to the world rejects any attempts to divide Sudan.

Nevertheless, lobbying is usually done outside this forum, and real power remains the domain of individual Arab countries with factors such as population and financial wealth swaying the final judgement. It looks like diplomatic Arab support and the habitual strong term condemnations will be in favor of our Arab African brothers, but in material terms, and as usual, it is the poorest and most needy among fellow Arabs that will be the most generous. We hope that the problem of Sudan will not go the same way as many other Arab problems have gone.

Yet, if one is to make an educated guess, the Arab League will not be able to do much once again. It is also likely that Sudan will be the double victim of what is termed as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as well. Like a victim of a crime of honour, the illusory broadbasket of Africa will have no one to turn to.

To hope much from the OAU is to indulge once again in a pipe-dream. An organization which was originally created as a response to the emerging African nationalist and radical states, has fallen into confusion after the loss of its center. What is radical and what is not, is something difficult to ascertain, therefore, the human element which was to any case, devoid from its charter, cannot be taken into consideration in this regard. Alas, another forum we must give a miss.

To go to the UN, its checkered history regarding the dealings with such matters, does not inspire much confidence. Nevertheless, its presence is much more desirable than its absence and perhaps its good offices can still be considered as the only place to find a compromise, providing of course, such a compromise is desirable. But what of the Arab world?

And what role can Islamic countries play? It is most important to realize that the question of geopolitics, control of natural resources, and border configurations are never as important as understanding the formulae of co-existence, and inter-communal unity. ■

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Business scene

The Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Dr Hashem Al Dabbas denied reports of a possible increase in fuel prices in the light of the oil agreement signed between Jordan and Iraq last week. Explaining the alternative measures being studied by the government to cover the increase in the oil bill to be paid by Jordanians, Al Dabbas said that the solution can be found by curtailing expenditure in the fiscal budget for this year. Iraq has increased the price of its oil exported to Jordan from \$15 per barrel to \$19 per barrel, costing the Treasury an additional \$75 million.

Investments in the agricultural sector is moving. According to statistics by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, investments in agriculture totalled JD 758.87. These are distributed amongst 25,073 companies.

Jordan expects to get \$360 million in loans till 1998. This is according to financial experts. The loans would be primarily from the International Monetary Fund. Because of these, Jordan's credit capacity has increased by 300% among 60 countries.

A Jordanian ministerial delegation has left for Brussels to hold a new round of talks concerning the Jordanian-European partnership agreement. Despite unconfirmed reports over differences between Jordan and the EU, the two sides stress that they will sign an agreement by next March. This is the fifth round of talks, and will give the two parties a chance to discuss pending issues, particularly Jordanian agricultural exports to the EU and Jordanian membership in other international treaties particularly the one relating to intellectual property rights. The delegation comprises, Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade and Industry Dr Mohammad Al Samadi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Planning Dr Nabeel Ammari, Director of the Customs Dept. Mr Nazmi Abdullah, the vice governor of the Central Bank of Jordan and other senior officials.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 29 January

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
UK Pound	1.1983	1.2043
Swiss Franc	0.4540	0.4563
Japanese Yen	0.5229	0.5255
German Mark	0.1344	0.1351
French Franc	0.6134	0.6165
Italian Lira	0.4048	0.4064
Spanish Peseta	0.0462	0.4642

Local and foreign investments continue on course

AMMAN (Star)—Since privatization is the name of the game for 1997, the volume of private company investments especially in the services sector recorded a sharp increase last year compared with other sectors. The service sector, evidenced by a boom in tourism and hotel construction, is leading the way.

But there is also a much more immediate reason for that. The government is taking it upon itself to turn its institutions to public shareholding companies. Initially these would be controlled by the government till they can be privatized completely.

Private companies are increasing in general however. All types of companies are witnessing both an increase in their number and in their capital holdings. The volume of investments in a total of 34,197 companies last year reached JD 499,861,000, representing 13.6 percent of the total capital of already established companies.

On the other hand, investments to limited liability companies reached JD 986,460,000. These are distributed among 4162 companies.

Companies in the public sector didn't do too badly either. The size of investment in public shareholding companies was JD 2,063,000 last year. Again this was distributed amongst 225 concerns.

According to statistics issued by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the volume of foreign investments

in newly established companies last year rose by 41.5 percent compared with 1995 to reach JD 28.2 million. This stands at four percent of the companies total capital.

So, this is good news since it would appear that the government's policy of attracting foreign capital is working.

The number of registered companies established by Jordanian, Arab and foreign investors totalled 4218 last year. Their capitals hit JD 768.4 million compared with JD 459.7 million in 1995 (a rise of 67 percent). In one year this has nearly doubled.

Foreign investment is today seen as a way forward to economic development. Indeed what it means as far as Jordan is concerned is that more and more foreign investors are gaining greater confidence in the Jordanian economy.

On the other hand, investments in newly established concerns were mostly in the service sector. These accounted for 78.3 percent of the total. About JD 601.6 million was invested in 1079 service companies.

However, there were hiccups. The Ministry of Trade and Industry pointed out that 1205 companies with capitals of JD 19.9 million had to cancel their contracts last year compared with 488 companies with capitals of JD 121.1 million in 1995. Not feeling too well about the situation, they may have withdrawn from the market.

Also, the local market faces some problems because

of the rise in newly registered companies and the inability of shareholders to cover the value of shares required by the companies' managements. As a result some companies decided to cancel their contracts.

But despite this, the total number of registered commercial companies last year was 2769 with capitals at JD 129.2 million (these stand at 16.8 percent of total capital in 1996. Among these compa-

nies were 301 industrial concerns (capital JD 28.2 million), one agricultural establishment at JD 4 million and 68 contracting companies (capital JD 5,248 million).

Investors have been rushing to register new companies over the last three years. They were driven by the high expectations and hopes that an economic upturn will materialize after the signing of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel.

Since 1993, the total registered companies in all sectors reached 13003 with capital exceeding \$101 billion.

Only last month, 1918 new companies were registered in various sectors covering industry, trade, agriculture, contracting and services.

So despite the general feelings, businessmen are quite optimistic that development will happen and that economic prosperity is around the corner.

JTC approves 1997 budget at JD 242 million

AMMAN (Star)—The board of directors of the Jordan Telecommunication Co., JTC, recently approved the company's budget for 1997 at JD 242 million.

Mr Walid Al Duweik, JTC chairman said that the estimated revenues of the budget are JD 242 million and expenditure is nearly JD 155 million.

This budget would generate a surplus of JD 132 million in 1997 compared with JD 120 million last year, Al Duweik said.

Such budget highlights the company's activities, and strategies to expand its services and modernize systems according to the actual needs to fulfill its targets.

Embarking on this basis paves the way for following future financial plans to eval-

uate activities and JTC performance through ensuring a better telecommunication service for all people.

The most essential target of the budget is to reduce pending applications through carrying out the projects of the national program for telecommunications and other developing enterprises that are involved in providing telephone lines and service for houses and commercial offices in the kingdom, Al Duweik continued.

Among JTC activities for 1997 is also to boost the level of services secured for clients as well as raising competence of the telecommunication network in Jordan. Moreover, JTC is seeking to modernize the operating infrastructure of telecommunication and making qualified staff and resources readily available for such a process.

JTC aims at developing the standard of its employees by organizing specialized training courses in addition to embarking on marketing and advertising programs to promote the new company and explain its strategic targets, Al Duweik added.

During the recent meeting of the Joint Jordanian-Israeli Commercial Committee, Jordan has called on the committee to remove Israeli obstacles imposed on the trade exchange movement with the PNA and increase the number of trucks and size of commodities allowed to enter the Palestinian market.

Representatives from Jordan, the PNA and Israel are expected to meet soon to discuss issues relating to economic and commercial cooperation between the three parties.

Jordan has lately managed to add charges on its trade exchange with Israel by increasing the ratio of customs tariffs on its commodities that go to Israeli markets as well as replacing the formula of the back-to-back system with the door-to-door one. This deal avoids delivery during cargo transportation via bridges and allows direct and easy movement of commodities.

Business Chronicle

Trade exchange between Jordan and PNA hits JD 24.5 million

DESPITE THE Israeli tough measures to block the way in front of economic relations between Jordan and the Palestinian territories, the volume of trade exchange between the two sides reached record levels last year.

According to latest statistics issued by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Jordanian businessmen have made a lot of deals with their Palestinian counterparts. The total till last November reached JD 24.5 million.

Jordanian exports to the self-rule territories reached JD 6.5 million, while it imported JD 18 million from the Palestinian areas during the same period. Jordan mainly exports cement while it imports fruits, vegetables, foodstuffs, construction materials, chemicals, textiles and cosmetics.

Both Jordan and the Palestine National Authority are seeking ways to increase the size of their trade exchange in an effort to remove the Israeli obstacles facing the movement of trade exchange via the crossing points between Jordan and the Palestinian territories.

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Pakistani stock market juggles global, Islamic concerns

By Kenneth J. Cooper
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

KARACHI, Pakistan—The first Friday of last October, Pakistan's oldest and largest stock market opened for trading. It was the first time to two decades that the Karachi Stock Exchange did business on a Friday—and it will probably be the last for a long time.

The Karachi exchange's shift to a Saturday-Sunday weekend in a bid to attract more foreign investors lasted just one day because of opposition from Islamic fundamentalists and a lack of support from private businesses and the government.

On 4 October, the day of Friday trading, small fundamentalist parties protested in front of the stock market and threatened unspecified consequences if it opened on Friday again. The market, established in 1947, promptly resumed its regular Sunday-through-Thursday schedule.

The failed experiment in Pakistan's financial capital and a similar experience in the textile center of Faisalabad stand as examples of how religious-based customs can prevent developing countries from becoming more engaged with the global economy.

Like most Islamic countries, Pakistan begins its two-day weekend on Friday, when devout Muslims follow a religious instruction to assemble in mosques for afternoon prayers.

The Koran, Islam's holy book, does not explicitly forbid work on Fridays. But most of the Islamic world—except for a few countries such as Turkey and Malaysia—has adopted the custom of closing workplaces and taking Fridays off.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan was a latecomer to this Islamic custom. It was not until 1977, 30 years after inde-

pendence, that Pakistan shifted to a Friday-Saturday weekend. The change was initiated by the government of then-Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was trying to appeal to Muslim clerics in an unsuccessful bid to cling to power.

Two decades later, the initiative for going back to working on Fridays came from the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the nation's largest business group.

Its leaders predicted that Pakistan could increase its exports if the nation's businesses were not out of touch with trading partners in Western and East Asian countries for three days of each week—Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Arif Habib, president of the Karachi Stock Exchange, said he followed the chamber's lead with the understanding that the government would alter the work week of state-owned banks and financial institutions after the market opened for trading on a few consecutive Fridays.

But the protest by the fundamentalist parties, which have not fared well in Pakistan's elections but do influence public opinion, apparently scared off the shaky government of Benazir Bhutto, who was dismissed as prime minister a month later.

"At that moment, the government was very much weakened. They didn't take the initiative," Habib said.

There was another problem: The chamber of commerce opened its Karachi office last 4 October, but few member companies did. The nation's business community was divided between export-oriented industries that favored the change and more numerous retailers that feared losing customers to competitors.

A leader of Pakistan's largest religious party, Jamaat-e-Islami, which did not partici-

pate in the stock-market protest, said working on Friday is neither a religious nor business issue.

Ghaffoor Ahmad, the party's deputy chairman and a former exporter, said that the Koran instructs Muslims "on Friday ... to offer prayer in congregation and then search for the bounty of God. That means do business."

But Ahmad argued that business in Pakistan has not suffered from Friday closings, citing growth in the country's international trade during the last two decades and the possibility of communicating via fax machines even when offices are shut.

Pakistan's foreign trade and investment have increased, but the growth has slowed during the last year because of

Bhutto's political troubles and the nation's economic problems, including a large budget deficit, a drop in foreign-currency reserves and the International Monetary Fund's hesitation to release crucial loans.

For some of the same reasons, the Karachi stock market has lost half its value since an all-time high was reached in early 1994, partly on the strength of new foreign investment.

Habib said he still believes that the Karachi Stock Exchange would benefit from Friday trading but said for now "we have given up." The market has no plans to repeat its experiment and no hopes any new government would risk provoking Islamic fundamentalists.

British Midland wins top industry awards

BRITISH MIDLAND, the airline for Europe, has received the highest accolades at the prestigious Airline of the Year awards, from *Executive Travel* magazine. British Midland took two of the top prizes at the event, receiving the Best Domestic Airline award for a record 10th year plus the Best Short-haul Carrier for the second time.

British Midland boasts other nominations to win the awards including British Airways, Swissair and Air UK. These latest awards follow British Midland's £15m upgrade of the Diamond EuroClass product, which offers business passengers new executive lounge facilities, improved in-flight catering and self-service ticket machines. This service is also now available on British Midland's domestic network, making it the first airline to offer a fully fledged business class product on the UK's major domestic routes.

Receiving the award, Austin Reid, managing director, said: "We are delighted to have been recognized as both the Best Domestic Airline and Best Short-haul Carrier, by the readers of *Executive Travel* magazine, as this demonstrates our continued commitment to becoming the best specialist short-haul airline in Europe. It also gives the seal of approval to the recent introduction of our upgraded Diamond EuroClass product, which for the first time gives business passengers the benefits of a separate business class cabin on domestic routes, as well as European services."

USAIR reports profit of \$263.4 million for 1996

ARLINGTON—USAir group, INC. reported a net profit of \$263.4 million for 1996 as compared to 1995's profit of \$119.3 million.

Operating revenues for the year were \$8.14 billion, an increase of \$668 million over 1995. Operating expenses were \$7.70 billion, \$552 million more than the preceding year. This, the operating income and net income all were records for the company.

For the fourth quarter of 1996, net profit was \$27.8 million, or \$0.08 per share (0.08 fully diluted), as compared to \$60.5 million, or \$0.61 per

share (\$0.54 fully diluted) after preferred dividend requirement, in the fourth quarter of 1995. This is excluding expenses for stock appreciation rights and the special profit-sharing program. Net profit for the quarter would have been approximately \$108 million.

"A tremendous effort by employees throughout USAir led to the outstanding results we are reporting today," said USAir chairman and CEO Stephen M. Wolf. "We leapt into the industry's top tier for on-time performance while increasing consumer confidence. We successfully more

than doubled our international operations, and employee task forces are definitely working on issues as wide-ranging quality of in-flight services and reservations. Our financial results prove that this focus on quality counts and the employees of USAir should take great pride in what they accomplished this past year."

"For all the superlatives we can report in our operations and our financial results, there is one number we are reporting today that remains very troubling. Our unit costs remain the highest in the industry and seriously restrict our ability to compete with expanding low-cost carriers. During 1996, Southwest and Delta Express added 223,000 seats per week in our markets," Wolf added.

Regular preferred stock dividends currently are not being paid but financial accounting principles require that they be reflected in statements of operations. A special payment of \$50 million will be made toward preferred dividend arrearages to holders of senior preferred stock. Earnings per common share were \$2.69 (\$2.33 fully diluted) based on 64.9 million shares outstanding (85.5 million fully diluted) compared to \$0.55 in 1995) based on 62.4 million shares outstanding.

USAir flew 38.9 billion revenue passenger miles in 1996 and 56.9 billion available seat miles. This was an increase of 3.5 percent in RPMs and a decrease of 2.2 percent in ASMs, as compared to 1995. The load factor was 68.5 percent, up 3.8 percentage points from 1995. The break-even load factor for the year was 68.9 percent. The average passenger journey increased 3.6 percent to 688 miles.

Egypt signs for £190m 'Hollywood on the Nile'

By Michael Theodorou

THE EGYPTIAN state Broadcasting Company has signed a £190 million contract with a British-based consortium to build a sprawling film studio on the outskirts of Cairo.

ERTU's new project, Media Production City will be one of the world's largest production studio complexes. The initial three-year contract provides for six digital production studios, workshops and administration buildings. Seven more studios are planned in the second stage.

The "Hollywood on the Nile" is likely to confirm the Egyptian capital as the cultural center of the Arab world and is expected to be a big earner for ERTU. The consortium is led by Sony Broadcast and Professional Europe. The Egyptian film industry, which celebrated its 100th anniversary last November, is the oldest in the Middle East and Egyptian films programs dominate viewing across the region.

With around 20 Arab satellite television stations, and around 100 television channels, there is a growing demand for more material.

The Times

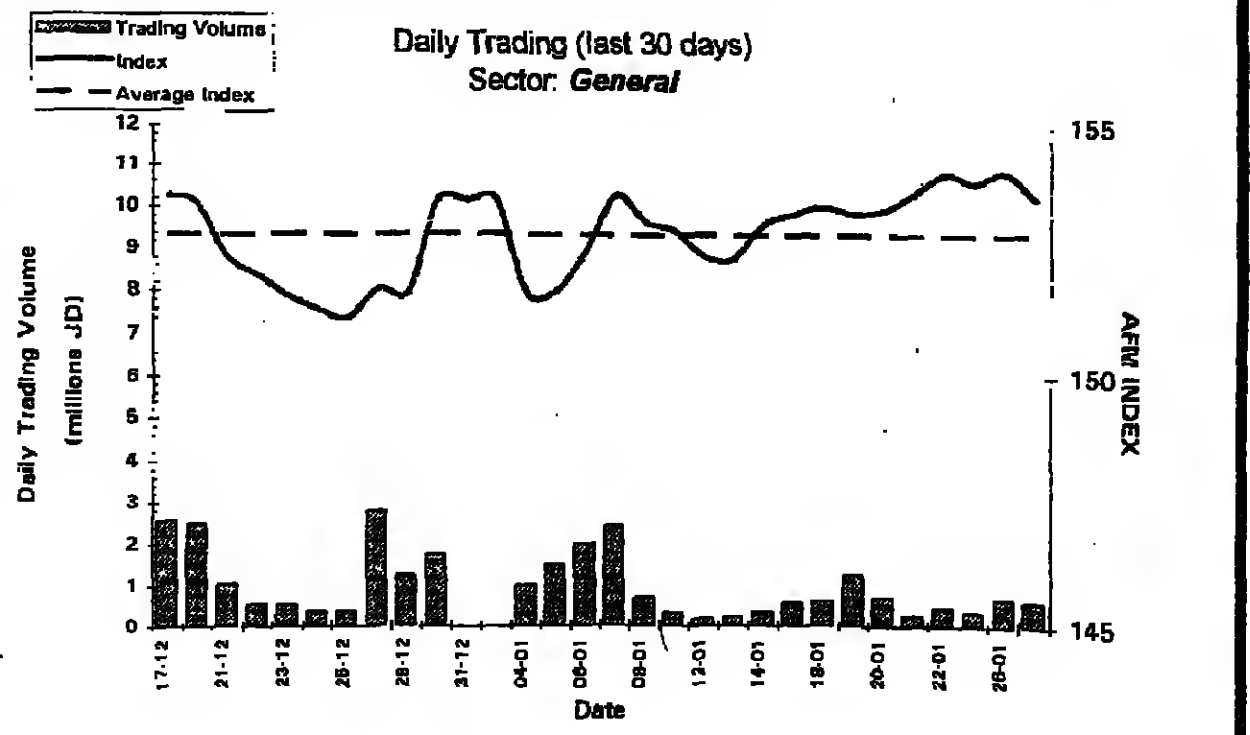
MARKET WATCH

25-28 January

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nayak Moulds and Dies Arab Int'l Hotels Jordan Phosphate Mines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nayak Moulds and Dies National Poultry Slaughter House Arab Int'l Hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockwood Industries El-Zay Ready Wear Jordan Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle East Pharmaceuticals Int'l Education and Investment National Poultry Slaughter House
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Poultry Slaughter House Universal Chemical Industries Arab Int'l Hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arabian Sea Insurance Kawther Investments Int'l Tobacco and Cigarettes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FINACO National Cables Nayak Moulds and Dies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zara Investments Jordan Tourism Transport National Cables
<p>General Price Pointers</p> <p>153,820</p>	<p>154,030</p>	<p>153,54</p>	<p>153,390</p>
<p>Trade Volume</p> <p>422886</p>	<p>713830</p>	<p>688387</p>	<p>1003132</p>
<p>Stock Volume</p> <p>300844</p>	<p>383563</p>	<p>436441</p>	<p>802765</p>
<p>Highest Traded Stocks</p> <p>Phosphate Mines 13268</p>	<p>Arab Int'l Hotels 68250</p>	<p>El-Zay Ready Wear 16808</p>	<p>Zara Investments 58000</p>

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949



Palestine Post

Israelis silence 'fasting' Cannon



By Jessica Berry

ISRAEL HAS silenced Jerusalem's Ramadan cannon, meaning Muslims who want to know when their daily fast begins and ends have to turn to their radios.

The rusty eight foot long cannon, standing in a graveyard facing the walls of the Old City, has been in use since 1918. It was fired during the Islamic holy month twice a day and once at dusk.

But this year the Labor and Social Welfare Ministry has deluged the cannon firer with long lists of safety and security reasons to prevent him from touching it.

Rajal Sandouka, who has been the keeper of the cannon for eight years, inherited the title from his father, as his father had before him. Their family, he said, came to Jerusalem with Saladin, the 12th century conqueror.

"I used to watch my father shoot this. I have known how to do it all my life," he said. Now the Labor Ministry has demanded that he take an intensive three-day explosives course in Tel Aviv, and acquire a licence before he is allowed to fire it again—and that, he says, is impossible.

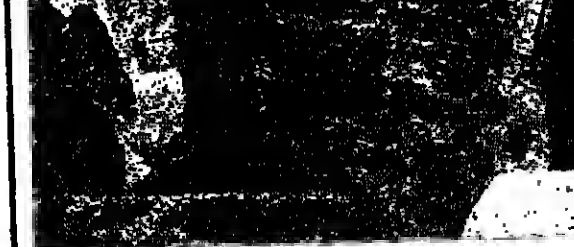
Mr Sandouka, who by day is an actor, has no time for that. Rather he has to make do with one Chinese fire-cracker daily, given by the Jerusalem municipality. He lets it off at the end of the day but, unless you are standing next to it, the chances of hearing the bang are slim.

The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Ikrama Sabri, was incensed. "They are imposing impossible conditions on the man," he said.

But the Israeli municipality is standing its ground. "Any person that wants to buy explosives must receive permission from the right authorities which are the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Israeli police force," it said. "Once the person has received permission, he/she must obey the safety and security codes."

The ruling appears all the more surprising as boys have been letting off a continuous stream of fireworks throughout the day in front of the Old City since the beginning of the holy month.

Daily Telegraph



● A new tunnel under the Al Aqsa Mosque is being dug by Israel according to Palestinian sources. Israel has denied such a charge which is made by PNA Religious Minister, Hassan Talbani and Umm al Fahim Mayor, Raed Saleh. They say that they have a video proving that such works are being carried out. This is part of a series of tunnels that is being dug up under Al Aqsa Mosque by the Israelis. It is feared that such works will eventually rock the foundations of the mosque.

Carnage escalates in Algerian civil war

By Charles Trueheart
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

PARIS—A surge of violence in Algeria's five-year-old civil war has claimed more than 200 lives since the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan two weeks ago, bringing a vow last Friday night from the North African country's president to harden his stand against militants seeking to overthrow the government.

There were reports that 40 people were massacred—their throats slit and some of them decapitated—last Friday in the village of Ouled Ali, 60 miles south of Algiers. Last Thursday, Muslim guerrillas reportedly slaughtered 15 members of a farm family, including 10 women and a toddler. According to Agence France-Presse, the "commando unit" tortured and mutilated its victims, an increasingly common signature of extremist bands waging a bloody insurgency against the government.

The carnage is common enough for Algeria, where upwards of 50,000 lives have been lost since the militants began their campaign of violence in 1992. But its escalation has broken the increasingly surreal silence of the military-backed government, which is held responsible for a share of

the continuing violence and which enjoys the tacit backing of France and the United States.

Lashing out at terrorists and the unnamed "foreign forces" behind them, President Lamine Zeroual last Friday night darkened his government's hard line. In a televised address, he vowed to eradicate the Islamic radical groups and showed no sign of openness to the political or negotiated solution that his regime's critics have been demanding.

"I confirm to the dear Algerian people the determination of the Algerian state to battle against the terrorist groups until their final eradication," Zeroual said, according to Reuters. "It is bands of criminals, traitors and mercenaries manipulated by external sources who are exploiting their savagery to serve foreign interests."

The fighting between government forces and radical Muslim insurgents broke out in 1992 after Algeria's military rulers canceled the country's first democratic, multi-party elections rather than lose power, as they were expected to, to the Islamic Salvation Front.

In addition to attracting militant Muslims, the Salvation Front, since outlawed, drew many nonradical or indifferent voters fed up with the govern-

ing party and military leaders who have ruled Algeria since its independence from France in 1962.

Since the canceled elections, the Armed Islamic Group, a violent organization with tenuous links to the Salvation Front, and other radical Muslim guerrillas have carried out tens of thousands of slayings, from bombings in city streets to roadside executions.

The balance of the killing—by some estimates, half of it—has been done in reprisals by Zeroual's security forces and by militias often armed by the government and answerable to no known authority.

For all the violence, Zeroual garnered a round of good publicity and enhanced credibility—and caused relief in Paris and Washington—when, 22 months after his installation by the military, he won a presidential election in November 1995.

Many of the Algerian regime's toughest critics concede that it was a legitimate victory. It gave a last burst of hope, Algerian analysts say, to the violence-weary Algerian middle class, already in deep despair over economic mismanagement and the unemployment of more than one in every four Algerians of working age.

But the violence has continued, and the government's claim last year that it had elimi-

nated all but "residual terrorism" is now cited daily as evidence of the regime's detachment from reality. Friday night's address took a more realistic measure of what has become a grisly daily pattern of random death, often involving throat-cutting or disembowelment, frequently of women and children.

Zeroual's reference to foreign plotters probably refers to opposition forces, including exiled leaders of the banned Salvation Front, who signed an accord two years ago in Rome calling for a negotiated solution.

The crisis in Algeria has intensified since November, when a referendum on a new constitution that ensures the government's complete authority over political life was passed by a nearly unanimous majority, according to the official results. But eyewitness reports from polling stations, a general mood of popular disgust with the generals and other unsentimental means have discredited the official results.

Analysts say a political solution is more remote than ever. "I am leaning toward the view that the present government is constitutionally incapable of changing its approach and fixing the problem," Graham Fuller, author of a recent Rand Corp. study of the Alger-



ian situation, said in an interview Friday.

The latest violence—more brazen, more bloody, more sophisticated than what came before—began with the onset of Ramadan on 10 January. A purported statement from the Armed Islamic Group's leader, Antar Zouabri, said this week "the war will continue and will intensify during the month of Ramadan. We have the means and the men to punish all who aren't on our side. ... (They) are apostates and deserve to die."

Since the holy month of fasting began, published reports from Algeria say, street bombings, hidden massacres and

gangster hits have killed more than 200 people—by whose hand, Muslim terrorist or government thug, is not easily known. Five car bombings in four nights this past week have rocked Algiers and its environs, that latest killing 10 people and wounding 30 outside a meeting place for militia groups in Bonafrik. 25 south of Algiers, news services reported.

The French government, Algeria's colonial master for 132 years, Thursday broke its usual silence about the chronic violence to say it was "preoccupied and shocked" by the "blind and savage" carnage of recent days.

Saudi Ambassador criticizes US officials' comments on bombing probe

By Thomas W. Lippman
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

WASHINGTON—The signs of strain between the United States and Saudi Arabia over the investigation into a terrorist bombing of a US military residence have increased with the distribution of a statement by the Saudi ambassador here criticizing FBI Director Louis J. Freeh and Attorney General Janet Reno for their comments to reporters last week about the sensitive case.

Freeh, in a Washington Post interview last Wednesday, and Reno in a press briefing the next day, said the Saudis have withheld crucial information about who was responsible for the 25 June bombing of the Khobar Towers housing complex in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 US airmen.

Before that, all Clinton administration officials who spoke publicly about the case had said that Saudi authorities were cooperating with the FBI.

The issue is sensitive because Saudi Arabia is a key economic and political ally of the United States, and the presence of US troops there has subjected the kingdom's rulers to fierce criticism from religious conservatives.

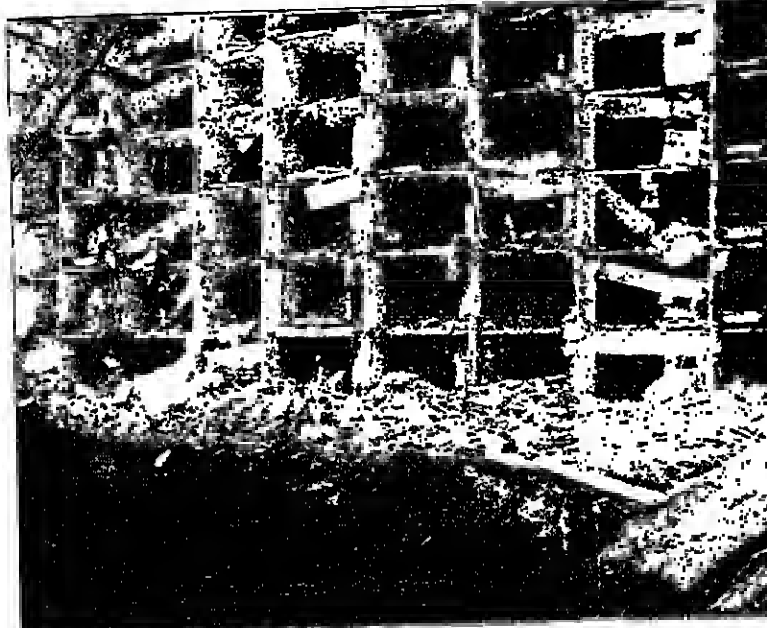
"With regard to security

questions, the subject is important and sensitive," the Saudi ambassador, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, said in a statement sent to news organizations last Friday night. "It cannot be worked out through the media." He did not name Freeh or Reno, but Saudi officials said they were the obvious targets.

What US officials have long feared privately is that the Khobar Towers investigation would end the same way as the earlier investigation of a bombing of a US facility in Riyadh. In that case, four suspects were beheaded before US investigators ever spoke to them.

While some suspects in the bombing have been in Saudi custody for months, Bandar said his government "is not accusing or absolving anyone yet as to the tragic events in the Eastern Province last summer. It would be premature to accuse or absolve anyone until the investigation is completed."

Bandar's statement did not



deny Freeh's charges nor commit the Saudi government to any particular course of action. It reiterated that "Saudi security agencies are responsible for any crime that takes place on sovereign Saudi soil and are doing a superb job."

It said that "excellent working relations exist between officials of both countries at all levels. ... Where there might be a difference on a particular point, we still have the same underlying objective."

Freeh, who has made three trips to Saudi Arabia to discuss the case, has received briefings on the investigation and some forensic and wiretap evidence, but US officials have not had access to any suspects.

One senior US official said it is unlikely that Saudi security forces will ever give the FBI unfettered access to suspects, any more than the FBI would give such access to the Saudis if the crime had occurred here.

Netanyahu calls for probe into Attorney General flap

By Rebecca Tronson
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called last Friday for a criminal investigation into allegations of wrongdoing in his government's ill-fated appointment this month of a short-lived attorney general.

The appointee for Israel's top law enforcement post, lawyer and political activist Roni Bar-On, resigned less than a day after he took office two weeks ago, stung by criticism from the media, the political opposition and legal experts that he was not qualified for the job.

This week, however, a political furor erupted over allegations, initially carried by a state-run television station, that Netanyahu had agreed to appoint Bar-On as part of a complicated deal to help a key member of the prime minister's religious-right coalition who is embroiled in a long-running corruption trial.

The reports involve alleged threats by the politician, Aryeh Deri of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party, to withdraw his party's support for career.

All named in the reports by Channel One television, including Netanyahu, Deri and Bar-On, have denied any wrongdoing.

Police spokeswoman Linda Menuhin said acting Attorney General Edna Arbel and top investigative officials will decide Sunday whether to open a probe into the matter. She said the initial requests to do so came from Yossi Sarid, who heads Israel's leftist Meretz Party, and from a public watchdog organization known as Israel's Movement for Quality Government.

On Friday, Netanyahu—after aiming a barrage of criticism Thursday at the reporter who broke the story—joined those calling for the police to get to the bottom of the allegations.

In a statement to members of his Cabinet, the prime minister called on police to conduct a "swift, professional and unbiased" investigation.

"I was amazed to hear these allegations," Netanyahu told the Cabinet, according to Israel Radio. "To the best of my knowledge, they have no foundation."

Nonetheless, the excitement of the political opposition and the concerns of legal experts and others here were deepened when Justice Minister Tzachi Hanegbi confirmed one aspect of the reports. Hanegbi, a former law clerk for Bar-On, had been considered the main sponsor of Bar-On's candidacy but was quoted Friday as saying the recommendation had come from the prime minister's office.

detainees irrespective of their political affiliation. We do our best to secure the release of all prisoners through coordination with all parties concerned including the PA's Legislative Council. We also observed a deterioration in the human rights record by the PA which was evident in the killing of 10 of the detainees in its jails.

Do you think that the PA is interested in a national dialogue with the opposition movements regarding the political issues?

The national dialogue is still an empty slogan in the absence of democracy. There is an urgent need for such a dialogue and to create a democratic atmosphere by stopping the arrest campaigns against Palestinians of different political affiliation. All calls to conduct a national dialogue will go in vain if they do not stem out of solid grounds of national unity, justice, and equality among all citizens. I believe that the PA would have interest in co-ordination and co-operation with the opposition, especially now, where the peace talks reached a stalemate.

How can the Palestinians get out of this political stalemate in your opinion?

The PA should stop negotiations with the Israeli government immediately on the pretext that this government does not show willingness to meet its commitments in accordance with the Oslo Accords, its procrastination over redeployment from Hebron, and in the light of its ambitious plans to Judaize Jerusalem. The PA and the opposition must work together to defend the national interests of the Palestinian people.

Palestine Times

The Islamic Salvation Party

Accords don't meet Palestinian legitimate rights

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Islamic Salvation Party (ISP) was established in Gaza after the coming of the Palestinian Authority to the Gaza Strip. Recently, members of the party elected a new political bureau. The Palestine Times had the following interview with Mr Yahya Mousa, the newly elected Secretary General of the ISP.

Do you think that the Islamic Salvation Party (ISP) still represents the same thought of Hamas, and what is the kind of relationship between your party and Hamas?

First of all, the Hamas movement expressed itself as the strong wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine, that's to say holding up the ideological vision meets perfectly with brotherhood and it is an indivisible part of it. The ISP represents the political orientation for Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine, so it bears the same ideological essence of Hamas. Yet, the Islamic Salvation Party represents a realistic response for the stage in the aftermath of Oslo agreements, and achieves the reconciliation between the ambition of people to implement the Islamic Project and the reality.

Concerning the relationship with Hamas, we can say that it is deep and relies on understanding, co-operation, and co-ordination with taking into account the special status of the ISP as being a political party working publicly and under the banner of law. According to the law, the ISP is prevented from using military activities.

How does ISP evaluate the political agreements between Israel and the PLO, and if ISP opposes these agreements, what kind of means will it employ in expressing its opposition?

We have asserted, in various occasions,

our opposition stand concerning the Oslo Accords and their supplements. Our opposition is based on the fact that these accords do not meet the legitimate and national rights of the Palestinian people. They also did not give answers to questions pertaining to the self-determination and the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland. On the contrary, the Jewish settlement activities continue. More than 300,000 dunams of Palestinian land have been confiscated by the Israelis in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; the refugee problem has not been resolved as yet; the Palestinian detainees are still being held in Israeli jails; and the Israeli occupation authorities continues the Judaization of Jerusalem. Moreover, the continuous closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip led to the formation of isolated cantons in the territories. We reject the basis from which the peace process emerged. The living conditions of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are getting from bad to worse. The results of the Israeli parliamentary elections transferring the power to the Likud pushes Israel towards reopening the agreements in an attempt to free itself from their commitments. This makes

us reassess the process with the aim to maintain the achievements of our people. We are committed to democracy and we will do our utmost to converge the political factions to play an effective role in reviving the Palestinians to continue the liberation process.

How do you assess your relations with the Palestinian Authority? Do you feel that there is some restrictions on your activities?

In preceding time, our relationship with the PA was foggy and gloomy as the PA regards our party suspiciously, mistrusting it in pretext that the ISP may carry out military and clandestine activities. In addition, there are some persons in the PA who try to prevent any closeness between the authority and our party fearing that such a relation between us could threaten their interests and power. Therefore, these people do their best to maintain the atmosphere. The contacts between the PA and our party were semi-frozen, but in the light of the recent elections and the coming of new leadership of the party, we expect a positive atmosphere to prevail. We expect

that the encouraging promises announced by the PA would be realized on the ground.

What is your position concerning the participation in the PA's institutions? And do you consider your participation in the Palestinian National Council (PNC) a mistake?

Despite the fact that we reject the Oslo Accords, we deal with them as a reality on the ground which must be acknowledged and respected. We regard the participation in leading the Palestinian society as a noble goal and a part of our duty. But the participation in the PA's institutions necessitates elaboration. We support this participation in general but we oppose undertaking ministerial posts in the PA's council as long as this will make our representatives in the cabinet involved in the negotiations with Israel. Concerning the participation in the PNC, we believe that the new elected leadership of the party should determine its position regarding this. I did not support participation in the last session of the PNC because the council convened for a limited objective which was to amend the Palestinian National Covenant. Such amendment

did not serve the goals of the party.

What is your perspective regarding the current negotiations between the PLO and Israel? Do you anticipate progress in the Palestinian status in both the political and security areas?

Israel wants a rapid end to the current negotiations. It sees no threat to its security. This is why the Likud-led government has delayed the redeployment of its troops from Hebron. Therefore we are pessimistic over the (peace) process. Not only do we not anticipate progress, but we believe that Netanyahu is leading the whole region to the verge of collapse.

The PA detains numbers of Hamas activists. Did you make any efforts to secure their release? And how do you assess the human rights record in the self rule areas?

The Oslo Accords created a miserable situation which affected the nation's existence. Both the PA and the Opposition committed mistakes. Our party plays a major role in reconciliation. We regard all the detainees in the PA jails as our own

كلنا من الشعب

Author defends his 'Colossal History' of Europe

By Bill Glauber
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

LONDON—Imagine the terror of writing the entire history of Europe. Where to begin? Where to finish? What to leave out?

"You've got to be foolhardy," says Norman Davies, a 57-year-old British historian who spent seven years writing the 1,365-page book *Europe: A History*. "You're sticking your head over a parapet in which certain people are bound to shoot at you."

The book is one man's unusual and controversial view of Europe from pre-history to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. A lot is here: The rise and fall of the Greek and Roman empires, the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and 20th century wars that would have "amazed the most barbarous of barbarians."

There are pre-historic recipes, prayers in Hebrew, musical scores and the parting words of the famous. Karl Marx, when asked for a death-bed comment, said: "Go on, get out!"

While the work has received glorious reviews in Britain—"A sumptuous mental feast," says *The Times* of London—it has been savaged by an American historian who alleges it contains a host of errors.

Even Davies admits in the preface: "This book contains little that is original." But he is toying with his audience, for he is aiming at nothing less than repackaging European history, balancing the scales between east and west. In Davies' care, European history finally stands united, from Ireland to Russia.

Even the maps are turned 90 degrees, forcing the reader to see Europe from a new angle, to understand just how vast and important the east is in relation to the west.

Davies calls this book "colossal history," one written on an enormous canvas and aimed at a wide audience. But the tale moves quickly. He provides a wide-angle view in densely-packed chapters that zoom in for closeups with 300 mini-essays on subjects ranging from Spartacus to ghetto life to birth control. He freezes moments that define eras: Napoleon bidding farewell to the Imperial Guard at Fontainebleau, France in 1814; Nazi war criminals being served with their indictments at Nuremberg in 1945.

"I do belong to the club which doesn't see a distinction between academic history and popular history," Davies says. "I don't see why a book shouldn't be intellectually sound, entertaining and fun to read. Historians who write academic history, which is unreadable, are basically wasting their time."

More than 50,000 copies of the book have been sold.

Davies' book is not the only major study of Europe now on the market. *A History of Modern Europe: From the Renaissance to the Present*, by John Merriman, and *A History of Europe*, by J.M. Roberts, also are vying for readers.

This series of major histories has been driven in part by recent events—the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. But there is also a yearning among some in Europe to take stock of the past, as the continent embarks



Napoleon

on historic change. For Europe is making plans to unite around a single currency. Armies that once stood on opposite sides may be brought together under the umbrella of NATO.

Davies' book is as good a guide as any to the past and, perhaps, the future.

For years, Davies mined the then-unfashionable history of eastern Europe. *God's Playground: A History of Poland* brought him a measure of fame in the academic world and in Poland. *The Economist* called the two-volume study "stimu-

lating, authoritative and highly readable." But the book also played a part in a 1986-87 controversy at Stanford University, where Davies was denied a chair in Eastern European history.

According to a 1987 article in *The Nation* magazine, Stanford officials said Davies' work had a "lack of objectivity," and was "insufficiently analytical." Davies contended that a group of Stanford professors alleged he was insensitive to Jews and served as an apologist for the Polish role during the Holocaust.

Davies filed suit against the university and some of his critics. But the California Court of Appeals ruled against him, saying he could not take testimony from history department members who had discussed the academic chair in a confidential meeting.

"Nobody has ever openly charged me with anti-Semitism," Davies says in his office at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London. "What they say is the things I write about Eastern Europe don't suit various people, especially in America."

Davies still has his critics there. Princeton University history professor Theodore K. Rabb savaged "Europe" last month in *The New York Times Book Review*, ridiculing the book for its tone, style and, most of all, alleged inaccuracies.

Among the alleged miscues, Rabb says Davies placed Hannibal in the wrong century, misunderstood Copernicus and provided various dates for the first historical mention of Moscow and the beginnings of the Dutch Revolt.

Davies contends "Rabb is either talking about totally trivial things or unsubstantiated charges, or he's simply wrong."

An unfavorable review won't spoil Davies' popularity in Europe. He's now engaged in the art of promotion, selling his book across the continent. But soon, he'll be back on the historical trail full-time. His next subject, he says, is the United Kingdom.

"I'll have a go at the British and sort them out," he says. "It will be short and pithy."

Col. Parker One for the money

By Richard Harrington
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

WHEN COL. Tom Parker passed away last week at the age of 87, it marked the death of a super-salesman whose one and only product—Elvis Presley—became the catalyst for a worldwide cultural revolution.

Parker, a one-time carnival Barker, never had a clue about Presley's sociological impact, didn't particularly care for rock-and-roll, and certainly didn't care for the fans. They were just marks.

He couldn't have cared much for Presley, either. When the singer died in August 1977, the first thing Parker told an associate was: "This won't change anything." And even as Presley was undergoing an autopsy in Memphis, Parker was punting the finishing touches on a souvenir merchandise deal, the final chapter in his client's transformation from cultural oddity to commercial commodity.

Parker and Presley represent the convergence of two characters from carnival culture: the poor country boy who grabs the brass ring and the mysterious stranger who fleeces the innocent.

The Colonel was often described as a cross between P.T. Barnum and W.C. Fields: in the King's court, he was combination court jester, Svengali and Robin Hood.

For Parker, success was never measured by creative achievement, only by financial payoff. Understandable since the bigger the pot, the bigger his portion. When million-dollar offers would come in for a concert or some other project, Parker would smile and say, "That's plenty for me, but what about my boy?" And he wasn't joking. Everything had its price, including Parker, who offered himself for interviews at \$25,000 for small talk, \$100,000 for long conversation. Neither situation promised anything resembling truth, of course.

Admittedly, the Colonel was a character—fat, oblivious to fashion, possessed of a strange, unexplained accent. But he was a cipher, as well. It wasn't until Albert Goldman's 1981 Presley biography that the world learned Col. Tom Parker was really Andres van Kuijk of the Netherlands. By that time, he'd been an illegal alien here for half a century, as well as an inadvertent cultural revolutionary by proxy. And just as Presley's greatest fear was that everything would suddenly disappear, fear of discovery and deportation kept Parker from ever fully enjoying the fruits of his client's labors.

Since Elvis Presley became an international icon, it's odd to fault Parker's efforts on his behalf. The two made unimaginable amounts of money. For Presley, what he received was so much more than he ever expected that it was apparently more than enough. For Parker, what started out as concern for his client's needs was gradually replaced by a fiscal greed that only a Wall Street shark could appreciate.

But the Colonel was more than a thief of funds. He was also the emulsifier of Elvis Presley's art, the defuser of the roiling rock-and-roll passion that marked his work, both live and on record, before Presley went off to serve his Army stint. Peter Guralnick's fine biography, *Last Train to Memphis*, ends with Presley heading off to serve in Germany; the Colonel who inhabits that book is almost amusing, but jocularly insensitive, in manipulating the media television in particular as Elvis mythology is constructed out of thin air.

"It's easy to imagine Guralnick's reluctance to address Presley's post-Army career and impossible to envision him casting Parker as anything but a villain. Presley's voice may not have changed, but he was castrated by Parker's engineered career choices in the '50s. One of the most dynamic performers of all time, one who revealed in audience response, Presley did no concerts between 1961 and 1969.

Though Presley had been defined and delivered to the public by television, Parker kept him off the tube for a decade until his triumphant 1968 special. Even then, Parker had wanted a tux-clad Presley to sing Christmas holiday standards with a string orchestra. In one of his few acts of defiance, Presley opted for tight black leather, rock classics and his old band.

And what was Parker's worst career choice?

Trapping Presley in three dozen of the most mediocre films ever attached to one name, most of them filled with horrid assembly-line pop pap (remember "Do the Clamhake"?). Meanwhile, Parker reportedly turned down possible Presley leads in the film version of "West Side Story" and the remake of "A Star Is Born," opposite Barbra Streisand (imagine!), as well as the John Voight role in "Midnight Cowboy."

According to last year's "The Inner Elvis," written by psychologist Peter Whitmer, Presley's problems with Parker were rooted in his desperate mama's-boy relationship with Gladys Presley. According to Whitmer, Parker was "a perfect psychological amalgam of an idealized mother. ... After Gladys' death in 1958, Tom Parker became Gladys Presley," with whom he shared such physical attributes as a round body and a round face with double chin.

Whitmer also writes that Gladys and the Colonel were both "masters of passive-aggressive manipulation (who) used subtle securities of controlling behavior with which they could coax and entice, rather than shout or push, to make their point. ... Forever suppliant before these he perceived as authoritarian, in this regard Elvis was like a weather vane in a strong wind."

On Aug. 15, 1955 Presley signed a usurious contract naming Parker his "sole and exclusive adviser, personal representative and manager." The standard manager's fee then (as now) was 10 to 15 percent, but Parker started at 25 percent. In 1966, he jacked it up to an unheard-of 50 percent.

Presley, ever isolated in Graceland, didn't seem to care about messing with what on the surface remained a winning formula.

Parker made a lot of bad deals as well, sometimes by making no deal at all. For instance, Presley was virtually the only American pop star of the '50s and '60s never to tour overseas, though there were myriad opportunities and enormous offers.

The reason? Parker was afraid that if he tried to get a passport, immigration authorities would find out he had entered the United States illegally and send him back to Holland. And the Colonel was so paranoid about losing control over Presley that he never would let Presley tour without him.

His worst trespasses, however, came in his dealings with RCA Records. Parker never pressed for a good royalty rate, even after Presley became the label's best-selling act. And in 1973, he sold the masters for all of Presley's recordings to RCA for \$5.4 million. Not only was that a fraction of their worth; after Parker's cut and taxes, Presley was left with \$1.35 million, most of that going to Priscilla Presley in a divorce settlement. With various ancillaries, Parker actually made \$1.5 million more than Presley on the deal, which reportedly cost the Presley estate more than \$300 million in royalties on sales of his albums following his death four years later.

About the same time as the RCA deal, Parker formed Boxcar Enterprises to handle Elvis merchandising, with Presley getting only 15 percent.

Eventually, of course, the chickens came home to roost. During an estate hearing in 1980, an alert Memphis judge questioned Parker's 50-percent commission as well as other elements of his contract and appointed a lawyer to represent and defend the interests of Lisa Marie Presley, then 13. The court subsequently declared Parker "guilty of self-dealing and overreaching" and said he had "huddled affairs not in Elvis' but his own interest." Calling Elvis "naive, shy and unassertive" and Parker "aggressive, shrewd and tough," it closed the books on any further dealings between him and the estate.

After being exposed in Goldman's Presley book and sued by the Presley estate, the Colonel proved wily as ever. He filed legal papers suggesting that since he'd served in the US Army without permission from the Dutch government, he had automatically forfeited his citizenship. Since he had never applied for US citizenship, he was essentially a man without a country and no one had jurisdiction over him. Such tactics delayed resolution so long that the Presley estate finally settled with Parker, and he received a \$2 million settlement from RCA Records. That was the last money he made from Elvis. ■



'In Love and War' misses the mark on both

By Rita Kempley
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

"IN LOVE AND WAR," a diverting romantic drama about a compassionate nurse and her patient, fairly tiptoes through the trenches and trauma of the First World War. Set in Italy near the end of the war, the film strives for emotional depth and geographical grandeur, but comes off like "The English Patient Lite." Though ambitious and handsomely mounted, the epic has all the sweep of a whisk broom.

Based on the diaries of Agnes von Kurowsky, the film stars a surprisingly tender Sandra Bullock as the brave and beautiful nurse who inspired Ernest Hemingway's tragic romance "A Farewell to Arms." Directed with style, if not flair, by Richard Attenborough, the film chronicles the short-lived affair between the 26-year-old Red Cross worker and Hemingway (dashing Chris

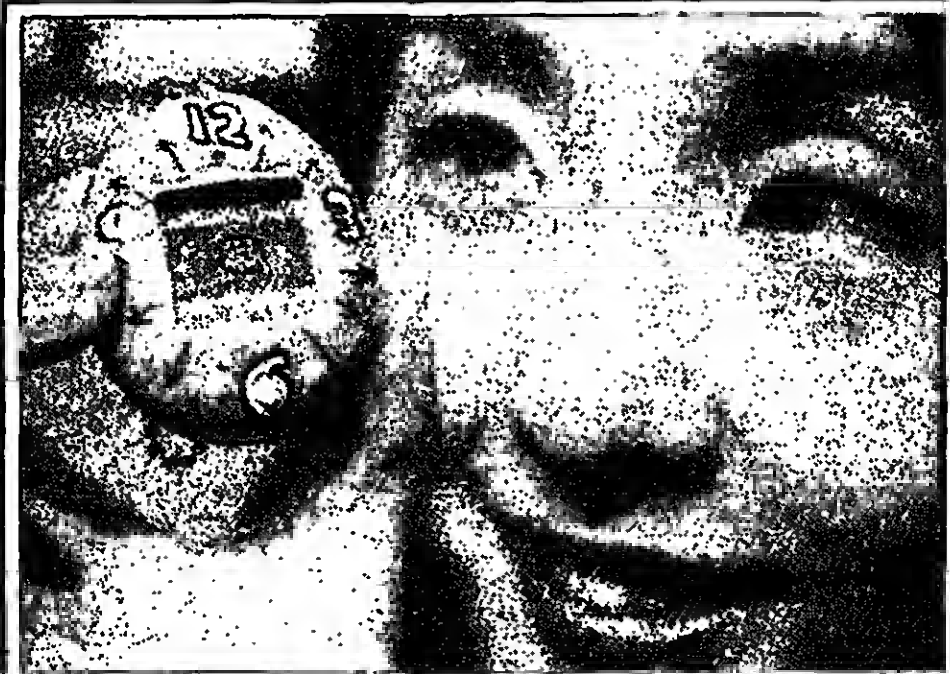
O'Donnell), then a fun-loving if cocky 18-year-old ambulance driver.

Ernie, convinced of his own immortality like most young people, is itching for some action when he first arrives in northern Italy in the summer of 1918. When he finds he's miles from the front, he manages to maneuver his way into the battle zone, where he is struck by machine gun fire while tending a wounded Italian officer to safety.

During his convalescence, Ernie falls deeply in love with Agnes, who is equally smitten by the handsome "Kid," but she struggles with the disparity in their ages.

Besides, she has a more suitable prospect in the debonair Italian doctor (Emilio Bonucci) with whom she works so well. Agnes finally gives in to her feelings for the younger man and promises to marry him when she returns to the States.

Although the story wants to



Japanese women are getting crazy these days buying the new electronic birdlike pet called the tamagotchi. A total of 350,000 of this digital creature have been sold to the public only in two months. When asking to be fed or cleaned up, the tamagotchi emits a 'pipi' sound. The tamagotchi is an electronic game with a difference. It is a virtual pet, but it acquires a life of its own once the owner sets a time button and the creature hatches on the screen. From that point on, the tamagotchi imposes a rigorous routine on the owner. The creature squeaks with delight when fed tidbits by the press of a button.

end then and there, the screenplay—by Allan Scott, Clancy Sigal and Anna Hamilton Phelan—picks up with Hemingway's return to his home in the United States, where he waits impatiently for his fiancée's return. His main activity is running to the mailbox to look for missives from his beloved. Meanwhile, Agnes begins to rethink her decision while visiting the handsome doctor in his splendid Venetian mansion.

Attenborough, whose filmography includes "Oh! What a Lovely War" and "A Bridge Too Far," has never shown a knack for war movies. Apparently, he thought of this film as a companion piece to "Shadowlands," his exquisitely moving account of C.S. Lewis' autumn romance.

Atas, we're left with a dull and improbable notion: Overnight, little Ernie has been transformed from affable opti-

mist to mean-spirited and unforgiving alcoholic who would pine over Agnes for the rest of his life. Agnes stupidly gives up the chance to marry a great house in Venice and a great job in nursing, the better to tend her broken heart. Atas, there is no point to all this suffering, no greater meaning to this tale of romantic woe.

It could be worse. They could have gotten married and moved to Madison County. ■

By Bill Glauber
LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

COULSDON, England—If Iraqi President Saddam Hussein wanted to know more about what was devastating Baghdad during the Gulf War, he didn't need to call in his spies.

All he had to do was check his Jane's publications, which would have told him about everything from Stealth bombers to Cruise missiles.

Here at the main headquarters of Jane's Information Group, some of the world's top weapons watchers and aviation aficionados produce yearbooks and magazines that no military planner, spy chief or airline executive can do without.

Jane's churns out more than 300 publications and pamphlets annually, covering armies to railroads, airplanes to radar. This year, the company is celebrating the publication of the 100th edition of its signature yearbook, "Jane's Fighting Ships."

It's other classic is "Jane's All the World's Aircraft," a dense compilation of the latest, greatest and sometimes scariest in military and civilian hardware.

And for those who need their military fix quickly, there's "Jane's Defence Weekly," the glossy magazine that tracks everything from arms deals in the Middle East to personnel shakeups in the Chinese army.

CBS News' "60 Minutes" once dubbed Jane's the "closest thing to a commercial

No military planner or spy chief can do without Jane's

intelligence agency."

That may have been an understatement. Jane's is noted for its military scoops, publishing photos and details of once-secret jets, helicopters and nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. Arms negotiators have consulted Jane's yearbooks—and then cut deals. Jane's manual on land mines was used by US soldiers as they deployed in Bosnia.

And, of course, an entire generation of techno-thriller novelists and military journalists have used Jane's publications and experts to keep pace with the latest trends in war-making equipment.

Among Jane's customers are the International Red Cross and the CIA. Saddam Hussein was a subscriber to "Jane's Defence Weekly," until his subscription ended when Iraq was cutoff from the rest of the world by UN-imposed sanctions.

"I don't know of any other information organization that has the stature of Jane's," says Eugene Carroll, a retired US Navy admiral who serves as the deputy director of the Center for Defense Information in Washington.

"They were given access to an awful lot of official data coming out of the ministries of nations all around the world," he adds. "The Pentagon cooperated with them, provided an awful lot of material. They are the unique authority on matters military."

The company has built its reputation on being a stickler for details and sticking to the facts. Jane's doesn't publish classified information. It relies instead on what is known as "open-source material," gathered from public documents and interviews with military hardware designers.

"Yes, we are an insider, but we protect our impartiality with our accuracy and our authority," says Alfred Rolington, the company's managing director. "If we didn't have that independence, then, frankly, no one would buy from us. Over the years, we've been accused of being communists, and, of being capitalist swine."

The company founder would probably have appreciated the back-handed compliment.

Fred T. Jane, born in 1865, was a vicar's

son who enjoyed practical jokes, home-made explosives and all things nautical. As a child playing war games, Jane devised signaling and identification methods that were later used by Britain's Royal Navy. In 1882, inspired by a British naval bombardment of Alexandria in Egypt, he created a portfolio of ship's drawings that would later form the backbone of the first edition of Jane's Fighting Ships.

"Jane can be expected to go a long way—in one direction or another," one of his teachers reported.

Jane was an illustrator, journalist, writer of cheap science fiction and adventure novels.

He was also a super patriot who feared Britain was being infiltrated by spies prior to World War I.

He once "arrested" a German he suspected was a spy. When the story hit the papers, the public provided Jane with tales of other alleged spies. He gave the information to the government, which used it as the foundation of a counter-espionage operation that led to the creation of the MI6 security service.

In 1898, he published his opus, "Jane's All the World's Fighting Ships." He followed that up in 1909, producing "Jane's Airships (Aeroplanes and Dirigibles)," a brief account of a brave-new-world of air transport.

Jane died in the flu epidemic in 1916. But his yearbooks survived and even thrived as the world arms race accelerated in a bloody, war-filled century.

For decades, Jane's was known only to military insiders, specialists and journalists.

But during the 1991 Gulf War, Jane's struck it big, as the world's media struggled to comprehend the high-tech war-making wizardry unleashed by the US military.

Paul Beaver, an exuberant Englishman and company spokesman, emerged as the company's global star, calmly discussing the merits and perils of such things as Scud missiles and Apache helicopters.

"The war surprised everyone because it was over so quickly and so many toys were brought out," Beaver says. "But from the beginning, we felt the land war

wouldn't last but 10 to 15 days. We were pooh-poohed at the time. People thought it would last for years."

But the fall-out from the war still affects Jane's. Now, it is recognized as a prime intelligence source. And the company is branching out, releasing CD-Roms, and even video games. A line of technothrillers written by Jane's staffers is also in the planning stages.

"We have 350 full-time staff," Beaver says. "We have another 300 contributors, rather like stringers. And then, there are 3,000 fellow travelers. Jane's grapples who might send us one or two items a year. Maybe a picture of a ship. A newspaper clipping."

The company has offices in Irvine, Calif., and Alexandria, Va., to track information coming from the US defense industry and the Pentagon. The company plans to open a Far East office this year.

Many of Jane's editors have military, intelligence and engineering backgrounds. Others are military hardware enthusiasts whose zest for detail has been rewarded with a high-profile job.

But the people who form the backbone of Jane's are the yearbook editors, who work out of their homes to the English countryside.

They are men like Christopher Foss, soft-spoken, friendly, and absolutely wild about tanks. When Foss, editor of "Jane's Armor and Artillery" isn't writing about, test driving or test firing toy tanks, he's adding to his collection of toy tanks. ■



Thompson out for shopping

Oscar-winning actress Emma Thompson meets up with mother, Phyllida Law and her pregnant sister to do some shopping in the January sales. Emma seems to have learnt her lesson after recently revealing all on a recent trip overseas. As you can see she's covering everything up except her big spender shopping bags.



Phillipe Guisiano

Transfiguration into Chopin

By Anca De Maio
Special to The Star

Saturday night the French pianist Phillipe Guisiano held the audience spellbound at the main theater of the Royal Cultural Center with an exceptional Chopin recital. For the first time in Jordan and in the Middle East the young Chopin specialist, born in 1973 to Marseilles, brought to life the universally recognizable music of the unique Polish composer. Tall and hesitant in his black suit, he walked onto the stage and sat down before the keyboard that in a second turned magic. After playing Robert Casadesu's expressionist Impromptu no.4 Op.64 as a special homage to the famous contemporary French composer, Guisiano passed from expressing his national belonging to interpreting his favourite Chopin repertoire.

"From the very beginning I could feel that there were affinities between Chopin and me, and so did my professors," said the pianist. "To be frank I cannot imagine my career as a pianist without Chopin," he added.

Many critics in France and jury members who saw Guisiano on the stages of various international music competitions acknowledged an incredible resemblance between him and Chopin in musical sensitivity and even in physical appearance. It is incredible how the reserved young man gets transfigured into a completely different character while on stage. Highly concentrated, his pale face bathes in flooding emotions, his fingers, light and fleet, magically flow up and down the keyboard all the way to the closing chords of a piece when a wide gesture marks a final stressed note. His hands rest suspended in the air, wrist to wrist, as if manacled for a second, before plunging again over the black and white keys for another smooth serene passage or for an impetuous tensed attack. Some

see in him Chopin's metaphoric reincarnation and find his interpretation so convincing that the public's acceptance is absolute.

The international Chopin competitions held in Warsaw every five years have a long tradition (that can be traced back to 1927) and a universally recognized prestige of the college of Chopin interpretation. Taking part for the first time in this competition in 1990, the then 17-year-old Guisiano was named its youngest laureate. Five years later he was the first ever appointed (second prize) winner of the 13th International Chopin Competition.

Generations of pianists interpreted Chopin with unlimited freedom and exaggeration in rhythm, tempo, dynamics, phrasing, and even in notes-reading. Arthur Schnitzler, a music critic, was one of those who blamed the "wrong tradition" in which the individual interpreter could go against the wishes of the composer. He established the performance practice of adhering to the letter while illuminating the spirit. Guisiano's Chopin playing is true to the original but never academic.

Guisiano respects the text up to the slightest pedaling detail but the intonation of the reading is sensitively creative and rhythmically elegant. "I can not say there is a right or a wrong way of interpreting Chopin," he said. "The approaches



of various schools differ in technical terms, but beyond the pianist virtuosity potential the question of Chopin's music authenticity is much simpler: either you feel it or not. "When the text is no longer read but felt, the interpreter recreates the music as if for the first time. It is the magic moment," when the performer and the composer become one," Guisiano pointed out. Critics have already noticed Guisiano's amazing capacity to enliven the abstract note and transform it into magical sound. "If one note only in a whole performance is felt with the same intensity as Chopin did, its sound will vibrate throughout the concert hall and make people happy." According to him, "the" sound came Saturday night before the intermission while playing Scherzo no.2 in B flat minor, Op.25. "The fantasia-impromptu in C sharp Major Op.51 as well as some of the Twelve Etudes Op.25 met his emotional exigency," he added.

The three Impromptus, following the introductory piece charmed the audience with their typically Chopinesque melodic filigree. Compositions with a less strict structure than a sonata and having something of the character of an improvisation, the impromptus is technically more accessible and easier to listen to than the rest of the repertoire.

Scherzo no.1 in B minor, Op.20 and Scherzo

No.2 in B flat Minor, Op.31 revealed their inter-rogative figures in passages of ascending tension and finger-twisting dexterity counterpointed by rocking calm movements embellished with cadenzalike ornamentations. The Twelve Etudes, Op.25 represents Chopin's second grouping of study-pieces or exercises whose original purpose was to teach skills, later to display them. Generally each Etude considers a single technical problem of execution and it is based on a single theme. Addressing all range of technical problems from arpeggios, octaves, double sixths and double thirds to hands and fingers independence, articulation, rhythm, speed and force, the exhausting Etudes make the daily exercise of any pianist. Beside the technical work they imply: they are a masterpiece of authentic music in themselves.

Guisiano underlined the unique subtleties with which Chopin made the passage from difficult training to real music making. Demonstrating scintillating virtuosity and tonal refinement, Guisiano ended the Etudes with the stormy applause of the enlightened public.

Guisiano formation as a pianist includes five years of study with professor Jacques Rouvier at the Paris conservatory, two years of perfecting study with the German professor Karl-Heinz Kammerling and another two years of preparation at the conservatory of Amsterdam. He has performed on prestigious stages in France, Austria, Italy, Japan, etc. This year's official touring has started with Jordan and will continue with Austria, Italy Canada and Japan. As for his discography in February he will record his first official compact disc playing Chopin. Guisiano's repertoire however is not limited to Chopin. He prefers classical to contemporary music and among his favourite composers he mentioned Rakhmaninov and Prokofiev. ■

Princess Wijdan will be an asset to the Institute of Diplomacy

AMMAN—With the blessings of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, chairman of the Institute of Diplomacy, the President of the ID, Dr Mazen Armouti appointed HRH Princess Wijdan Ali as lecturer and senior researcher at the institute as from 1 February 1997.

Dr Armouti said that the Princess distinctive knowledge of Islamic art and civilization and international cultural relations, and her vast experience in the fields of diplomacy, university teaching, writing, arts, and volunteer work, as well as membership in cultural organizations will enrich the work of the institute.

Princess Wijdan was the first woman to represent Jordan at the United Nations meetings (the Economic and Social Council ECOSOC) in Geneva and the 19th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York in 1962. She was also the first woman to be appointed by the Foreign Ministry as assistant director of the Department of International Organizations, and was chosen in 1965 to be programme officer of UNDP.

She holds a Ph.D and an MA degrees in Islamic art from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of London University, and a BA degree in history from the Beirut College for Women (now the American University in Beirut). In 1992 Princess Wijdan became president of the founding committee of the Higher Institute for Islamic Art and Architecture of Al Al-Bayt University, after which she became assistant professor of Islamic art and aesthetics.

Considered one of the pioneers of the



Princess Wijdan

modern art movement in Jordan. Princess Wijdan has organized 21 solo art exhibitions. These took place in Amman, West Berlin, London, Madrid, Louisville, Washington DC. She also held 48 group exhibitions at numerous museums throughout the world including the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, the British Museum in London, the Center d'Art Vivant de la Ville de Tunis in Tunis, and the Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie in Morocco.

The princess was awarded a number of

medals and awards including the Al Hussain Bin Talal Gold Medal for Artistic Achievement and an award from the International Council of Women in the Arts in Chicago for outstanding contributions. She was also chosen among 100 personalities throughout the world as "Ambassador of the Arts" by World Link magazine published by the World Economic Forum in Geneva.

Princess Wijdan founded the Royal Society of Fine Arts in 1979 and the National Museum of Fine Arts in Amman a year later. She also organized two international seminars on Islamic art in 1988 and 1996, in which researchers and scientists from around the world participated. The princess also organized the largest exhibition held in the West, on "Contemporary Art from the Islamic World," in co-operation with the Royal Society of Fine Arts in Amman and the Islamic Arts Foundation in London. The exhibition was held in London under the patronage of Prince Hassan and the Duke of Kent.

The International Center for Islamic Studies (London), the World Arts Forum (Geneva), the Organization of the Islamic Conference International Research Centre for Islamic History, Culture, and Arts (IRICA) (Islamabad) whose 13th annual session of its Governing Board was hosted by Princess Wijdan in Amman in November of 1996 and organized by the ID, the Arab Thought Forum, and the World Affairs Council are all but a few among the organizations and centers in which Princess Wijdan is a member. ■

The Big Red Boat breaks all-time booking records

PORT CANAVERAL. —Premier Cruise Lines has kicked off 1997 with the strongest booking week in its 14-year history.

Net bookings for the week of January 6 were up by 50 percent over the same booking period in 1996, with the line's popular cruise and attraction vacation packages also experiencing an 80 percent increase in net bookings.

"We are absolutely elated about last week's activity," states Gary Sala, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Premier Cruise Lines. "It is clear that our increased efforts in advertising and promotion, combined with onboard product enhancements, expanded Orlando attraction packages and a renewed commitment to servicing the travel trade, have all worked together to create a record-breaking demand for our vacation products."

Premier recently announced a profitable year in 1996, its first in several years. The company is forecasting another profitable year in 1997.

According to Jim Nalk, president and CEO of Premier, "Several factors will continue to act favorably for The Big Red Boat in 1997: a continued positive economic climate and high consumer confidence levels; Disney Cruise Lines' advertising campaign, which will persuade more families to consider cruising as a vacation option; continuation of our successful Kids Vacation Free promotion; and an upwards trend in group and charter business."

Premier Cruise Lines operates two ships, both departing from Port Canaveral, Florida. The family cruise line, also known as The Big Red Boat, specializes in one week vacations which combine a three-or four-night cruises to the Bahamas with Orlando theme park packages.

Premier is a subsidiary of Viad Corp., a S&P 400 Mid Cap company with \$2.3 billion in annual revenues. Viad was known as The Dial Corp prior to the company's spin-off its consumer products division in August 1996. ■



Iftar ceremony in preparation for Dubai Shopping Festival

AMMAN (Star)—In preparation for the upcoming Dubai Shopping Festival 1997, which will take place between 27 March till 26 April, an Iftar ceremony was held at the InterContinental Hotel last Wednesday. The event was organized by the UAE International Airlines and Tourism and Trade Promotion Council of Dubai. In attendance was a large number of travel agents, businessmen, journalists and representatives of advertising agencies.

During the press conference that was held after the Iftar, Mr Zuhdi Al Khafif, the Cultural Attaché at the UAE embassy in Amman said that the festival will not only focus on commerce but it also has a cultural aim. This is in addition to the sport and artistic activities that will flavor the event.

Participating in the conference were the Charge d'Affaires of the UAE embassy in Amman, the coordinator of the festival, Muhammad Al Qarqawi, the operation manager at Dubai Tourism Marketing Administration, Muhammad Khamis, and the director of UAE Airlines in Amman, Said Elamran.

Al Qarqawi said at the festival there will be a slash of up to 50 percent on prices of goods.



He added that Dubai hotels will offer visitors a 40 percent discount. Also UAE airlines will allow a 10 kilograms additional weight onboard. This is combined with several gold prizes and raffles.

Khamis said that the festival attracted 1.6

million visitors last year and its profits exceeded \$800 million.

At the end of the reception a draw was held whereupon Sami Saqer and Samir Mutawe' won round-trip tickets to Dubai. ■

AGENDA

Exhibitions

- Contemporary Arab Artists Exhibition, The New Collection at the Darat Al Fann, continues till 27 February.
- Works by Muhammad Ali Shaker at The Orient House, Shmeisani, ends today.
- L'Institut du Monde Arabe at The French Cultural Center, continues till 6 February.
- Mini Bazaar and open house at Um El Kundum. Lithographs, old postcards and photographs on Jerusalem, Chinese paintings, arts and crafts, fresh farm produce, off the Airport highway on the way to the Arabian Horse Club, first left at the top of the hill, Friday 31 January from 11:00 am till 5:00 pm. Tel: 664605.

Films

- Pour La Peau d'un fic at the French Cultural Center, 3 February, at 8:30 pm.

SCRAPBOOK

By Marwan Asmar

The never never!!

DEBT IS a social curse, it's a disease that continues to bite our very veins. Let's leave aside the macro-debt, the one that exists between states or is created as a result of loans by international financial institutions. What we are talking about here is micro-debt created by micro-credit, the ones that affect you and me.

Unlike the debt that is created by what is termed as the "plastic" or credit cards in the West, where debt is institutionalized through specialized companies, our debt is much more mundane, parochial if you like, created on a personal level and has a social twist to it.

What we are talking about here is getting into debt with the local shopkeeper and grocers and even the dry cleaner. Running up bills is a phenomenon that exists all over the country. I heard it said that people can do without buying new clothes, but they can't do without buying food, the essential ingredient of life.

Could we then say eating on debt. Well maybe. Housewives, the culprit most of the time who run bills up, do not only buy food, but all sorts of household items, and the bills just keep piling up and up and up.

Some people have bills that run up to hundreds of dollars and they just don't care. What's more is that these are not poor people but quite well off and in the end think that they are doing the shopkeeper a favor by continuing to "take" from him.

While some may say that this is the shopkeepers' fault for allowing people to run into debt, they would of course be right, but in this country, it is the system, the norm, people buy now and pay later. There is a term for it in England, calling it buying on the never, never, meaning buying on hire purchase, something that will never end.

However, in this country, people prefer not to use the mechanisms provided by financial institutions such as banks, that control debt. Here the never never is much more social. "Oh we know the shopkeeper, he does not mind," families and parents mutter. Thus the never never can literally mean the never, never, if shopkeepers are not careful. People have long developed an ingrained social attitude that shopkeepers don't mind how long they wait to pay up. What this means off course is that whole families effectively end up living on the goodwill of the shopkeeper. Such an attitude, however, is downright selfish.

But debt is a social disease that does not exist only in this country, but all over the world. A program on Syrian Television I was watching last week was very telling. The owner of a clothes shop went out of business because of increasing debt that he could not pay off. This was made by the fact that the debts were created by people buying on the principle of paying later. In their case, it literally meant never. Using his friendship to the owner of the shop, in one case, a parent came to buy new school clothes for his children and just increased his account further.

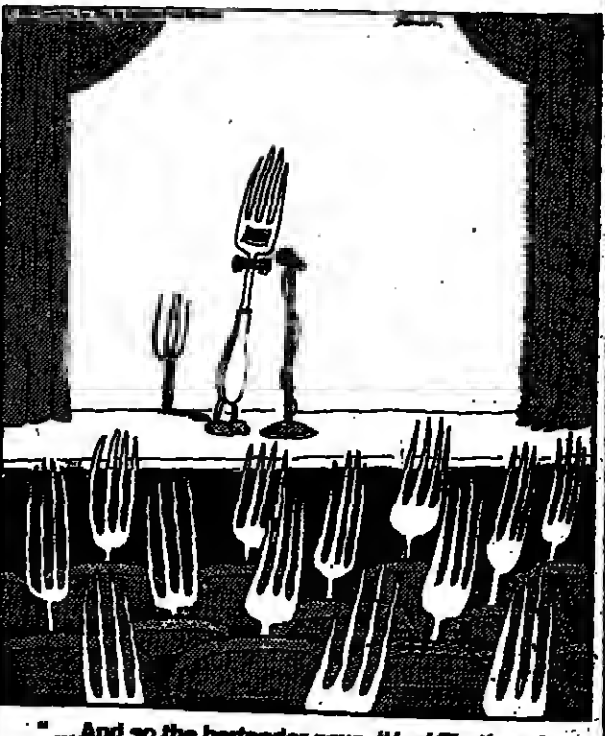
The program represents a true to life cases and shows that the debt issue is dealt with in a social context. It is funny, but unlike with the case in the West, here, for most of the time, the people who end up burdened with the debt are the shopkeepers themselves and not the people who run up the bills in the first place. They become debt-ridden and in a spiral of debt that could eventually put them out of business like what happened to our friend in the TV program. To get away from customers who only lived on debts, he ended up buying a falafel sandwich shop. People just have to be able to afford the price of a sandwich, but you never know. ■

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY SALA



"Coincidence, ladies and gentlemen? Coincidence that my client just happened to live across from the A-1 Mask Co., just happened to walk by their office windows each day, and they, in turn, just happened to stumble across this new design?"



"...And so the bartender says, 'Hey! That's not a soup spoon!' ... But seriously, forks ..."

1:00—Holly Wood
1:30—Min Al-Hadi
2:00—Mohammed
2:30—Chir Firas
3:00—Feature Film
3:30—Hollywood
4:00—Link with the
4:30—Singer
5:00—Frank Prince
5:30—New Hollywood
6:00—Hollywood
6:30—Frank Prince
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1:00—Holly Wood
1:30—Min Al-Hadi
2:00—Mohammed
2:30—Chir Firas
3:00—Feature Film
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11:30—Frank Prince

CROSSWORD

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30 Across	30 Down

JANUARY 1997
Middle East Beat
by Chairi Janbek
Sudan

The Star's TV GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 1 - 7 February

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—Chris Cross
3:00—Feature Film: *Benji the Hunted*, Red Hegal and Nancy Francis
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—The Muppet Show
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Hanging with Mr. Cooper (Comedy)
8:00—Oriental Rugs (Doc)
8:30—Prism
9:10—Lois & Clark
9:30—Superman
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Magyver
11:50—Feature Film: *Honky Tonk*, starring Clark Gable and Lana Turner
01:05—Ramadan Talks

SUNDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—French Programs
3:00—Feature Film: *Young Giants*, starring John Huston and Peter Fox
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—You Bet Your Life
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Oriental Rugs (Doc)
8:30—Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)
9:10—Tycoons (Doc)
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Islam in a Changing World
11:00—Hot Shots
11:50—Blue Grass (Mini Series)

MONDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—Deep Water Haven
3:00—Feature Film: *The Case of the Witch Who wasn't*, starring Madeline Langlois and Stefani Gaudin
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—1 love Lucy
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Roseanne
8:00—Documentary
8:30—Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)
9:10—Extreme Pilot (Adventure Drama)
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Journey Across the Land of Islam
11:00—Under Suspicion
11:50—Blue Grass (Mini Series)
01:15—Ramadan Talks

TUESDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—Dog House
3:00—Feature Film: *The Comrades of Summer*, starring Joe Mantegna and Natalya Negoda
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—You Bet Your Life
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Murphy Brown
8:00—Oriental Rugs (Doc)
8:30—Encounter



Babylon 5 (Science Fiction), Sunday at 8:30pm

9:10—The Lost Civilizations (Doc)
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Islam in a Changing World
11:00—Snowy River
11:50—Yonch and Die (Mini Series)
01:05—Ramadan Talks

WEDNESDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—Escape from Jupiter (Science Fiction)
3:00—Feature Film: *Spotswood*, starring Anthony Hopkins and Angela Punch
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—The Muppet Show
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Baker's Field P.D. (Comedy)
8:00—Documentary
8:30—Challenges

9:10—NBA: Basketball Games
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Journey Across the Land of Islam
11:00—Cobra
11:50—Touch and Die (Mini Series)
01:05—Ramadan Talks

THURSDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—They Came from Outer Space
3:00—Feature Film: *Space Chase*, starring Tracy Hart and Lee Korf
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Paranormal
8:00—Islam in the West
8:30—Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Islam in a Changing World
11:00—Feature Film: *Johnny's Girl*, starring Treat Williams and Mia Kirschner
12:00—Mini Series
01:05—Ramadan Talks

FRIDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—Crystal Maze
3:00—Feature Film: *Circus World*, starring John Wayne and Claudia Cardinale and Eric Soltz
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Down to Earth
8:00—Oriental Rugs (Doc)
8:30—Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)
9:10—Hunter
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Documentary
11:00—Feature Film: *Savannah Smile*, starring Mak Miller and Chris Roberson
12:00—Mini Series
01:05—Ramadan Talks

SATURDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—French Programs
3:00—Feature Film: *Young Giants*, starring John Huston and Peter Fox
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—You Bet Your Life
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Oriental Rugs (Doc)
8:30—Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)
9:10—Tycoons (Doc)
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Islam in a Changing World
11:00—Hot Shots
11:50—Blue Grass (Mini Series)

SUNDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—French Programs
3:00—Feature Film: *Young Giants*, starring John Huston and Peter Fox
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—You Bet Your Life
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Oriental Rugs (Doc)
8:30—Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)
9:10—Tycoons (Doc)
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Islam in a Changing World
11:00—Hot Shots
11:50—Blue Grass (Mini Series)

MONDAY

1:00—Holy Koran
1:05—Min Alhadi Al Mohammadi
1:30—Cartoon
2:30—Deep Water Haven
3:00—Feature Film: *The Case of the Witch Who wasn't*, starring Madeline Langlois and Stefani Gaudin
4:50—link with Channel 1 for sunset prayer and Iftar
5:30—1 love Lucy
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5:30—You Bet Your Life
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Murphy Brown
8:00—Oriental Rugs (Doc)
8:30—Encounter

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): *Vampire in Brooklyn*
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): *The American President*
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): *Johnny Mnemonic*
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): *Dumb & Dumber*
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): *Custom Made Citizen (Play)*

Highlight of the week at the Pleasure Dome

● **Power Rangers: Six heroic Teenagers defend the earth against the Ultimate Evil!**
Ivan Ooze, the most sinister villain the universe has ever seen intends to take over the world and he has the armies to do it. Only the Power Rangers can stop him. But to do so they'll have to discover an ancient source of power the likes of which they've never used before.
All new zords explode across the screen in this non-stop action adventure. Featuring state-of-the-art visual effects and great new songs from some of the hottest bands around (Red Hot Chili Peppers, Van Halen, Dew) Power Rangers the movie is a pulse-pounding thrill of a ride. They've never been stronger. Never been bolder. Never more fearless—Until now.

Courtesy: "The Pleasure Dome"
Tel: 676558 - Fax: 5538087



SIX HEROIC TEENAGERS DEFEND THE EARTH AGAINST THE ULTIMATE EVIL

ORIGINAL Video Releases

■ **Dazed And Confused:** It's the last day of high school before summer vacation 1976 (The film is shot in the 90's though). There are fixes for everything that bothers you at 17. Sex is still safe; drugs are not dangerous yet and booze is having fun. The soundtrack on this film is a real killer of a track, song after song of the greatest from the 60's and 70's.

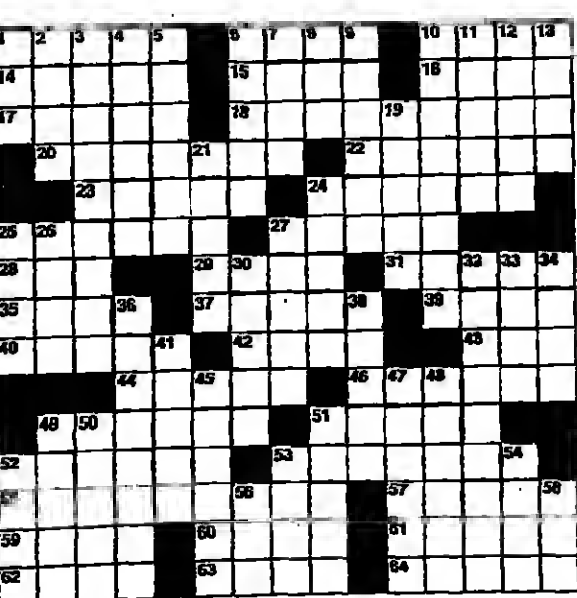
■ **To Die For:** Nicole Kidman is even more stunning than ever in her role as a weather reporter on TV. Married with the not so ambitious Matt Dillon, she would do anything to get what she wants... absolutely anything. "What's the point of doing anything if people are not watching?"

■ **Unlawful Entry:** A policeman's concern for the safety of a couple living in the neighborhood becomes a twisted obsession. The protector becomes the predator and security develops to be the couples nightmare. An excellent thriller starring Kurt Russell, Ray Liotta, and Madeleine Stowe.

Coming on Valentine's Day (14/2/97)

INDEPENDENCE DAY: The film that grossed more than any other in the history of box office sales.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS
- 1 "Carmen"
 - 6 Jernings, actor of old
 - 10 Perot, for one
 - 15 Main vein
 - 16 Mexican snack
 - 17 Theatrical
 - 18 Take a second job
 - 20 Served ice cream
 - 22 City in Florida
 - 23 Radio device
 - 24 Soaked
 - 25 Word on some postcard
 - 27 Kind of truck
 - 28 Potent
 - 29 Potable
 - 31 Treadle
 - 35 Catalog
- DOWN
- 1 Napery
 - 3 Vol. (court term)
 - 4 Powerful beam
 - 42 Nail
 - 43 Storage place
 - 44 Old Nick
 - 46 Penitentiary
 - 47 Rapid-fire speech
 - 51 Hall a Washington city
 - 52 Smoother
 - 53 Getting
 - 11 Golf score
 - 12 Yeasted
 - 13 Gossamer
 - 19 Jacket
 - 21 Kind of adjunct
 - 24 Swiss city
 - 25 Great — of
 - 26 Inter —
 - 27 Tree
 - 28 Clergyman
 - 29 With gusto
 - 30 Clepton or Holden
 - 34 Artist
 - 36 Most intangible
 - 38 Asian land
 - 41 Badger's cousin
 - 45 Three lines of verse
 - 47 Most sick
 - 48 Cane —
 - 49 Fit of resentment

—THIS WEEK'S— HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun's in Aquarius, causing a shift toward technology. Aries (March 21-April 19). Concentrate on your work and establish a routine that saves time. You're in for a lot of playful confrontation.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). There's a conflict of interests. You want to play with your sweetheart, but you have to work.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Clean your house or room. You'll be glad you did. You'll want to entertain company.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). You should study new ways to make money. Your natural talent for that endeavor is enhanced.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). You work hard for the money. You'll have to start thinking about serious matters. Consider options carefully and make your decision.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're strongest now, so learn whatever you'll need to know. The focus shifts to money. You'll earn a lot of it if you can keep up with the demand.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're in the mood to party but there are too many overdue chores on your list. Romance is certainly better.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Let friends entice you out of hiding. You'll have to go back into seclusion soon, to finish a writing project. Also, catch up on the latest gossip.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're more deliberative than usual, which is good. Just take your time and you'll do fine. You are extremely popular — even more than usual.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). If you've got a job, ask for a raise. If you don't have a job, these are excellent days for getting one. Go out with friends for a cheap dinner.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're just coming into your power. Use it to find another source of financing. Adventure beckons. Take an excursion beyond your normal boundaries.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Your partner's got the right answer. Investigate loans and pay your bills. Finish up your business so you can get out of town as soon as possible.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: You could achieve great prominence this year, if you get your facts straight. Travel and adventure beckon.

Bridge

Easy Does It
By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♠ A 10 9 6 4

♥ A K J 6 2

♦ 4

♣ Q 2

WEST

♠ J 8 6 2

♥ Q 10 4 3

♦ K 10 6 5

♣ 8

EAST

♠ K 7

♥ 9 8 7

♦ Q J 9 8 3

♣ 10 7 5 4

SOUTH

♠ Q 3

♥ 5

♦ A Q 7 2

♣ A K J 9 6 3

The bidding:

North East South West

1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass

2 ♥ Pass 3 ♥ Pass

3 ♥ Pass 4 ♠ Pass

6 ♠ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Eight of ♠

It is all very well to look for spectacular plays on every hand. However, be prepared to accept the reality that, more often than not, the simple line is the best.

There is considerable dispute about the meaning of South's second bid. To those who apply the fourth-suit forcing to everything they see,

the situation is crystal clear. We, however, lean toward using the fourth suit artificially only at the two-level, and here it was intended as a high reverse to show a good hand. North had no trouble reading it as such, hence the jump to six clubs.

The contract is better than it might seem on the surface, since West might make a helpful opening lead. The trump salvo did not further the cause, except to solidify the club holding. After toying with other ideas, declarer finally elected to adopt a straightforward line to land the contract if hearts broke 4-3 or the queen was doubleton, and trumps no worse than 4-1.

The opening lead was run to the closed hand, declarer capturing the ten with the jack. Next came a heart to the ace, followed by a heart ruff in the closed hand. The ace of diamonds was cashed and a diamond was trumped with the queen and another heart was ruffed low.

When both defenders followed to this trick, all was well. Trumps were drawn, declarer discarding three spades from dummy. The ace of spades provided the entry to cash the king and jack of hearts, bringing declarer's total to 12, and the last trick was surrendered to the defenders.

Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

POURC

TREEB

FORFET

DOAZIC



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: "FOOD" IN THE COURT

ANSWER: GROUP BERT REPORT ZODIAC

© 1997, Tribune Media Services

Words of Wisdom

Ignorance is oblivious to its own state.

Help others and you will help yourself.

Constantly seeking entertainment is more exhausting than working.

Happiness lies in forgetting yourself.

A gem becomes more valuable with polish, but the process does not take place without friction.

Bad habits practiced frequently often become necessities.

Haste trips itself up.

© 1997, Tribune Media Services

Diamonds shine at Dallas Jewelry



THE RECENTLY established fine jewelry store in Shmeisani at Al-Hamrah Building is a remarkable place to visit. There you can gaze your eyes with the wide varieties of diamonds that will cherish special moments and make them last for ever.

Mr. Bashir Hashem will assist discerning ladies in choosing what is best for their taste. He says that each lady has her own touch in selecting the valuables which reflect her personality. The store includes a range of precious, semi-precious stones, birth stones as well as pearls.

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Yasser Arafat en visite à Amman

Le roi Hussein de Jordanie et le président palestinien Yasser Arafat ont eu mardi à Amman un entretien sur les derniers développements du processus de paix, insistant particulièrement sur l'aspect de la coopération économique. Le roi Hussein a réaffirmé au cours de cet entretien, auquel participaient notamment le prince Hassan et le Premier ministre Karim Abdel Karim, son soutien au peuple palestinien et à sa lutte pour obtenir le respect de ses droits sur son sol. De son côté, Yasser Arafat a lui-même remercié le roi Hussein pour ses efforts qui ont permis la conclusion le 15 janvier dernier de l'accord de redéploiement de l'armée israélienne de Hébron. Le roi Hussein avait largement contribué à la conclusion de cet accord en proposant une formule de compromis entre responsables palestiniens et israéliens. Les deux dirigeants ont aussi passé en revue les prochaines étapes des négociations israélo-palestiniennes sur le statut final des territoires palestiniens. Les deux parties se sont engagées à accentuer leur coopération dans différents domaines après les congés de l'Aïd El Fitr.



Portrait

Une touche de Palestine

A vingt ans, Salim Ashkar se lance dans une carrière de pianiste international. Pour cela, ce jeune musicien bénéficie de l'appui de la Welfare association, une organisation palestinienne.

Né à Nazareth en

1976, Salim Ashkar étudie actuellement le piano à l'Académie royale de Londres. Ce jeune virtuose palestinien, deux fois lauréat du concours international de piano de la Fondation de la Culture, était à Amman au début du mois. Il a donné deux concerts dans la capitale jordanienne, tous deux organisés par la Welfare association.

«J'ai toujours vécu dans une ambiance musicale», raconte Salim. A la maison, il y avait un piano et des disques et depuis l'âge de quatre ou cinq ans, j'écoute de la musique classique.

Pour ses parents, la musique est importante. Sa mère, très douée elle aussi, aurait aimé devenir une musicienne professionnelle. «Mais en raison des traditions familiales, elle n'a jamais pu développer ses talents. Mais elle m'a beaucoup aidé à réaliser ma vocation», explique Salim.

Maha, la mère de Salim, avoue cependant que ce n'est pas elle la première qui a découvert les dons musicaux de son fils, mais l'un de ses oncles, réfugié palestinien de 1948 qui vivait à Saïda. «Après l'invasion israélienne du Liban en 1982, mon oncle a eu la permission de rendre visite à sa famille restée en Israël», explique-t-elle. Il est alors frappé par la passion manifestée par le jeune Salim pour la musique et encourage la famille à lui donner des leçons de piano. Salim a alors sept ans et c'est pour lui une véritable révélation. «Dès que j'ai commencé à jouer, j'ai su que la musique allait être la chose la plus importante de ma vie», confie-t-il.

A dix ans, il joue dans un programme de télévision diffusé par une télévision américaine.

«A New-York, le professeur Edward Said le remarque. Ce chef de file des intellectuels palestiniens de la diaspora le met immédiatement en contact avec la Welfare association, une organisation fondée en 1983 par des hommes d'affaires palestiniens et qui a pour but de soutenir des programmes d'aide et de développement en faveur de Palestiniens.

Pris en charge par l'un des responsables de cette association, A.M. Qattan, Salim peut poursuivre son éducation musicale et entamer par la suite une carrière internationale.

Depuis l'âge de douze ans, il donne des concerts dans le monde entier, ce qui l'oblige à beaucoup voyager et surtout à beaucoup travailler, entre 8 et 9 heures chaque jour.

Cette vie organisée autour du piano a transformé sa personnalité. Il avoue qu'il s'est tou-

jours senti un peu différent des autres jeunes de son âge. «La musique est le fondement de ma vie. Jouer du piano n'est pas un métier ou un hobby, c'est une passion qui engendre une manière différente de penser, qui n'est pas la même que celle des autres jeunes».

Pour sa mère présente à Amman aux concerts de son fils, avoir un fils si doué peut s'avérer parfois fatigant. «Quand Salim était jeune, ce n'était pas toujours facile car il était très exigeant envers lui-même. Je lui ai consacré une bonne partie de ma vie et je ne le regrette pas. Au contraire, je suis prête à lui donner encore plus s'il en a encore besoin».

Claudine Assad



Salim Ashkar en compagnie de la reine Nour lors d'un concert donné à l'hôtel Intercontinental.

Religion

L'Islam en France

Tous les musulmans de la planète rentrent demain dans la dernière semaine du mois de ramadan. En France, l'Islam est la deuxième religion et compte 4 millions de fidèles.

Lors de sa visite

en Jordanie en janvier 1996, le président de l'Assemblée nationale française Philippe Seguin avait souligné l'importance des liens entre la France et les pays musulmans en rappelant que la France était «un plus grand pays musulman que le monde». Les musulmans sont en effet environ 7% de la population française, ce qui classe l'Islam comme la deuxième religion de France.

Les plus nombreux sont d'origine maghrébine, principalement algérienne. Selon un sondage réalisé au début de l'année dernière, 85% se déclarent croyants, 27% pratiquants, 60% jeûnent tout le ramadan, 21% quelques jours, 31% prient quotidiennement, 16% fréquentent la mosquée le vendredi.

La France compte huit grandes mosquées, dont la plus ancienne est celle de Paris, édifiée en 1922 en hommage aux soldats musulmans de la première guerre mondiale, et 120 mosquées ou salles de prières pouvant accueillir de 200 à 1000 fidèles, ainsi que plus d'un millier de locaux aménagés.

Majoritairement sunnite, la communauté musulmane est divisée en courants dépendant du rite. Elle n'est pas représentée dans sa totalité par une autorité incontestable, responsable du domaine religieux. Plusieurs institutions ont vu le jour ces dernières années, comme la Fédération nationale des musulmans de France ou le Conseil de réflexion sur l'Islam en France. Mais des guerres de chefs et de clans n'ont pas permis de fédérer tous les fidèles, seule la Mosquée de Paris restant un pôle pour de nombreux musulmans et leurs diverses organisations.

Les grandes associations islamiques de France contrôlent 80% des mosquées et des lieux de prière, plaçant des imams atitrés formés dans des pays arabes. En l'absence de structures de formation de niveau universitaire en France, les cadres religieux continuent en effet d'être «importés» du Maghreb ou d'Egypte. Les 20% restants sont eux des imams auto-proclamés qui se chargent essentiellement de diriger les prières.

Le Jourdain

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

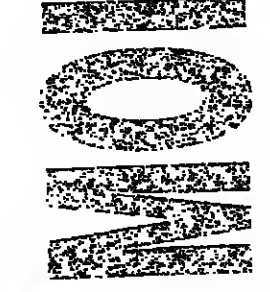
Cinéma

Début d'un cycle «Polar» consacré aux films policiers. Le 3 février à 20h30 au Centre culturel français, Pour la peau d'un flic.

Exposition

«L'Institut du monde arabe», jusqu'au 2 février. Le Centre culturel français vous propose de découvrir cet endroit créé pour assurer une meilleure diffusion de la culture arabe en Europe.

SELON



Le gouvernement actuel a réussi là où les autres avaient échoué: sans qu'il ait eu à bouger le petit doigt, il assiste aujourd'hui à la constitution d'un front rassemblant le parlement, le gouvernement, l'opposition et même la liberté de la presse, ou plus précisément, pour conserver une presse impuissante et inefficace.

Suite à la récente publication dans l'hebdomadaire Al Bilad d'un article jugé immoral qui traitait de la sodomie chez les couples mariés, tout le pays s'est élevé contre la presse jordanienne accusée de violer les bonnes mœurs.

Il est incroyable de voir à quel point la publication de cet article scandaleux a bouleversé tout le pays, menant à l'arrestation le même jour de trois journalistes.

Les sanctions qui ont suivi cette affaire n'ont pas touché uniquement l'hebdomadaire Al Bilad, comme cela aurait été le cas dans n'importe quel pays où la loi règne. Des journalistes appartenant à d'autres titres se sont retrouvés poursuivis eux aussi et l'un d'eux, pour la première fois de l'histoire de la Jordanie, a été condamné à la prison ferme. Et les menaces se multiplient à l'encontre des journalistes à qui l'on recommande désormais de bien réfléchir avant de publier un article qui pourrait porter atteinte aux bonnes mœurs.

Toutes ces sanctions à l'égard des journalistes sont prises sous le regard bienveillant du syndicat des journalistes. Les procédures ont reçu non seulement l'appui du syndicat, mais aussi celui du parlement et de l'opposition qui prétendent toujours être les gardiens de la liberté.

La semaine qui vient de s'écouler peut en fait être qualifiée de semaine noire pour le journalisme jordanien. Le parlement et l'opposition islamique ont violemment critiqué la presse hebdomadaire dans son ensemble. Et le gouvernement ne peut lui qu'applaudir en voyant le syndicat des journalistes publier un communiqué de presse condamnant l'ensemble des hebdomadaires en leur reprochant de faire un mauvais usage de la liberté de la presse.

Comme si toutes ces attaques n'étaient pas suffisantes, un journaliste connu pour être un avocat des droits de l'Homme a été vu aux sièges de différents journaux ces derniers jours en train de collecter des signatures de journalistes membres du syndicat afin de pouvoir poursuivre Al Bilad en justice.

On n'a jamais vu ce genre de solidarité se développer entre le gouvernement, le parlement et la presse à un moment où la liberté de la presse était en danger, lorsqu'il s'agissait de libérer un prisonnier politique ou de lutter contre la loi martiale.

Par contre, on voit cette solidarité aujourd'hui fonctionner pour réprimer les libertés publiques. C'est au tribunal de juger si Al Bilad a commis une erreur grave. Cette prérogative ne revient pas au gouvernement qui utilise aujourd'hui pour condamner l'ensemble de la presse. S'il y arrive, c'est en partie grâce à la presse elle-même qui lutte contre ses propres droits et qui donne au gouvernement le droit de faire ce qu'il veut.

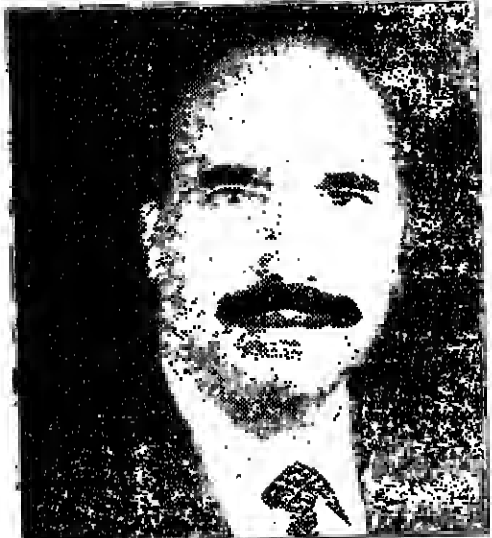
C'est aujourd'hui Al Bilad qui est la cible de tous. Mais il ne serait pas surprenant que le prochain inculpé fasse partie de ceux qui soutiennent aujourd'hui le gouvernement.

Sa'eda Kilani

Politique intérieure

Une liberté qui circule mal

En publiant une circulaire visant à contrôler les différents centres culturels du pays, le ministère de la Culture a déclenché un tollé de protestation. Beaucoup refusent en effet cette nouvelle réglementation qui, selon eux, menace la liberté d'expression.



Ahmad Qudat



Fakhri Kowar

La liberté d'expression est-elle en danger en Jordanie? La circulaire numéro 1/97 émanant du ministère de la Culture peut permettre de se poser cette question. En effet, le 6 janvier dernier, Ahmad Qudat, ministre de la Culture, a fait savoir aux départements de son ministère, dans les différents gouvernorats du pays, que toute activité culturelle ne pouvait désormais pas avoir lieu sans autorisation préalable du ministère et celle du gouverneur administratif.

Des réactions franchement hostiles à cette circulaire ne se sont pas fait attendre.

Un tollé de protestations et d'indignation s'est élevé contre cette circulaire qui, selon certains, annonce le retour à l'état d'urgence et la loi martiale en application dans le pays entre 1967 et 1992. Fakhri Kowar, président de la fédération des écrivains arabes et ancien président de l'association des écrivains jordaniens, a appelé à la suppression pure et simple du ministère de la Culture puis qu'il joue le rôle de «gouverneur culturel militaire».

Devant les parlementaires, le député de Kérak Nazih Amman lui a aussi demandé au ministère de retirer sa circulaire, accusant Ahmad Qudat de tenter de contrôler les activités intellectuelles dans ce pays.

Selon des informations dignes de foi, le ministère de la Culture a rendu publique cette circulaire au lendemain de la conférence donnée par l'opposition politique jordanienne Leïth Choubelat au forum culturel de Kérak. Figure de la lutte anti-normalisation qui a récemment bénéficié d'une grâce royale alors qu'il purgeait une peine de trois ans de prison, Leïth Choubelat s'était

alors violemment opposé au gouvernement du Premier ministre Abdel Karim Kabariti, qui, selon lui, «a conduit le pays à la faillite». Selon ces mêmes informations, Ahmad Qudat a tenté d'empêcher la tenue de cette conférence en ordonnant la dissolution du comité directeur du Forum quelques heures avant sa tenue et à un usage de ses prérogatives pour désigner un nouveau «comité directeur provisoire». Celui-ci aurait alors aussi refusé l'annulation de cette réunion, apparemment pour des raisons pratiques.

Devant cette vague de protestation, Ahmad Qudat, membre du parti conservateur al-Ahed, a tenté de faire machine arrière au cours d'une conférence de presse qu'il a accordée, voila une dizaine de jours. Il a expliqué que «la circulaire concerne pas les activités intellectuelles, mais seulement les festivals, les fêtes culturelles et les activités de masse». Il a justifié cette

mesure par le «besoin d'évaluer l'efficacité des quelque 275 associations culturelles existantes au ministère». Pour lui, les lieux culturels ne doivent pas être «transformés en forums de pure politique».

Seule l'Union des écrivains jordaniens, organisation proche du gouvernement et rivale de l'Association des écrivains jordaniens, a jugé les propos du ministre comme étant «responsables», tout en reconnaissant que certains règlements concernant les écrivains ont besoin d'être amendés.

La conférence de presse du ministère de la Culture n'a pas apaisé les esprits de la majorité de l'opposition.

Dans une lettre adressée à M. Qudat, l'association jordanienne des droits de l'Homme voila une dizaine de jours, il a demandé de retirer cette circulaire car elle est «en contradiction avec la constitution jordanienne, la Charte nationale, ainsi qu'avec les conventions internationales des droits

de l'homme que le gouvernement jordanien a ratifiées». Monammed Soubehi, avocat renommé en Jordanie, a lui écrit dans sa chronique régulière au Doustour que «le ministère de l'Intérieur se montrait plus indulgent que le ministère de la Culture».

Comme on peut l'imaginer, cette circulaire a réouvert le débat concernant les limites de la démocratie jordanienne, sur le lien indissociable existant entre le culturel et le politique et sur l'ambition, tant répétée, de transformer Amman en une capitale culturelle à l'instar du Caire, de Beyrouth ou de Bagdad.

En fait, cette circulaire contredit la philosophie même du ministère de la Culture qui ne cesse de prôner le dialogue. Quelle discussion reste en effet possible après cette circulaire du 6 janvier?

Suleiman Sweiss

Partenariat euro-jordanien

Quelques difficultés bloquent encore l'accord

En discussion depuis maintenant plusieurs mois, l'accord de partenariat entre la Jordanie et l'Union européenne est actuellement examiné à Bruxelles par les deux parties. Une réunion qui devrait permettre de régler les derniers points de désaccord.

Pour la Jordanie,

1997 doit être l'année d'un rapprochement important avec l'Union européenne. C'est en effet dans les semaines à venir que devraient aboutir les discussions portant sur la signature d'un accord de partenariat. Depuis hier se déroule à Bruxelles une réunion technique entre les responsables jordaniens et européens visant à aplanir les dernières difficultés que rencontre encore cet accord.

Yves Gazzo, chef de la délégation européenne d'Amman, participe à cette réunion. Avant son départ pour la Belgique, il a détaillé pour Le Jourdain les quatre points principaux sur lesquels s'achève encore cet accord.

La question des personnes renvoyées. Selon les réglementations européennes, une personne renvoyée aux frontières d'un pays membre doit être renvoyée vers le pays d'où elle est partie. «Il s'agit de personnes non jordaniennes qui veulent entrer en Europe et qui sont jugées non désirables en Europe pour différentes raisons. Or, pour les Européens, elles doivent rentrer en Jordanie puisqu'elles viennent de Jordanie».

Le problème du cumul des règles d'origine. «Si vous êtes par exemple un investisseur israélien et que vous investissez en Jordanie pour produire des tee-shirt, vous pouvez, pour exporter en Europe, bénéficier à la fois d'aides offertes à Israël et à la Jordanie. Mais pour bénéficier de ce cumul des règles d'origine, il faut non seulement qu'un accord d'association existe avec Israël et avec la Jordanie, mais aussi entre Israël et la Jordanie. Car le but

des accords de partenariat est de réussir, par la biais des accords bilatéraux Nord-Sud signés avec chaque pays, à pousser les pays du Sud à commercer aussi beaucoup plus entre eux pour augmenter les flux Sud-Sud».

Les droits de propriété industrielle et intellectuelle. «C'est sans doute le plus gros problème qui reste à régler. Les produits pharmaceutiques représentent le troisième poste d'exportation de la Jordanie. Or, selon la loi jordanienne, il est possible de copier le produit d'un concurrent si l'on n'utilise pas le même nom pour le commercialiser. Dans l'industrie pharmaceutique, les frais de recherche sont énormes et en Europe, le prix de vente des médicaments est tenu en compte. Or, le secteur pharmaceutique se développant beaucoup actuellement en Jordanie, les industriels européens craignent de voir leurs produits «piratés». Il s'agit donc de tenir compte des intérêts des deux parties pour trouver un arrangement. Je pense que la Jordanie a intérêt à se conformer aux normes internationales pour deux raisons. Premièrement, cela va permettre aux entreprises qui sont bonnes de se démarquer et de renforcer la crédibilité de l'industrie jordanienne. Et deuxièmement, il s'agit pour la Jordanie de faire des choix afin de rejoindre l'Europe. Et il est important de respecter les lois et règlements existants».

Dans le domaine des droits intellectuels, un projet de loi est actuellement à l'étude pour obtenir le respect des droits d'auteur.

L'agriculture. «Les Européens ont demandé à la Jordanie la liste des produits agri-



coles qu'elle souhaite exporter vers l'Europe. Il s'agit désormais de fixer les quantités exportables de concentrés de tomates, de fraises, de fleurs coupées, et de raisin. Cette question dépasse le simple problème de tonnage car il s'agit pour les Jordaniens de s'offrir des perspectives de développement. Et décider quelles sont les exportations les plus importantes pour leur pays et d'orienter leur économie en fonction. Or, le manque d'eau que connaît ce pays rend ce point particulièrement délicat.

Si les deux parties parviennent à trouver un compromis à la suite de cette réunion de Bruxelles, un dernier examen par le Conseil de l'Europe et par le conseil jordanien des ministres permettra ensuite la si-

gnature de l'accord de partenariat, «ou cours du premier semestre 1997», selon Yves Gazzo.

«Une fois l'accord signé, nous allons nous mettre à réfléchir sur les pans de l'économie jordanienne qui ont besoin de renforcement, les projets qui

ont besoin de financement. Or, tant que l'accord n'est pas signé, tout cela est encore en sommeil. Pour le moment, la Jordanie bénéficie d'aides d'ajustement structurel, mais ensuite, des programmes plus ambitieux en matière de mise à niveau économique pourront être étudiés».

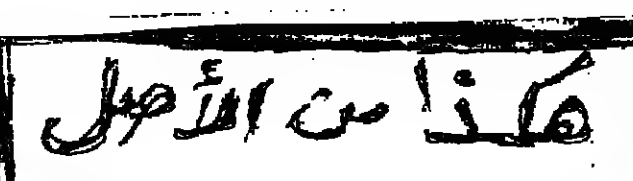
Des financements qui pourront intervenir dans les trois domaines définis par la déclaration de Barcelone signée en novembre 1995 par les membres de l'Union européenne et douze pays méditerranéens. «La déclaration de Barcelone est un processus auquel est liée une importante masse financière d'assistance (environ 5 milliards d'Ecu pour cinq ans, soit environ 6,5 milliards de dollars). Un paquet financier qui a été mis en place pour soutenir trois volets principaux: un volet politique et sécuritaire, et un volet économique, et un volet société civile. En signant l'accord de partenariat, la Jordanie se met donc en position de coopération renforcée avec l'Europe», ajoute Yves Gazzo.

Olivier Bras

Vous voulez écrire en français?

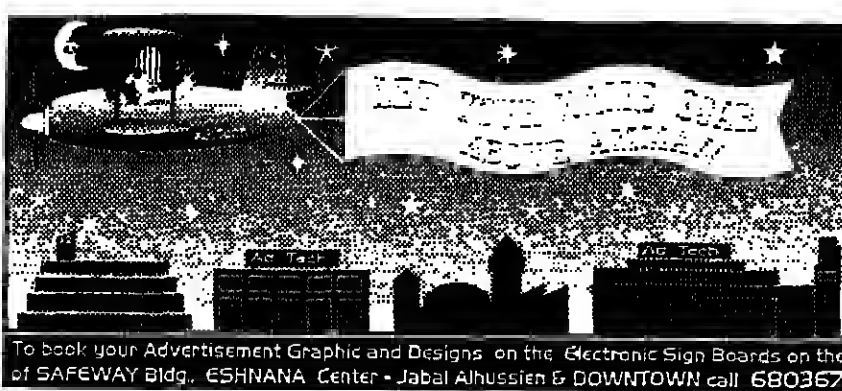
Alors n'hésitez pas à collaborer à la rédaction du Jourdain.

Que vous soyez passionné d'économie, de politique, de faits de société ou de culture, vos articles nous intéressent. Pour tout renseignement, contactez Olivier Bras au Star au 645 380 / 652 380.



Activities

Royal Cultural Centre	6610247	Concord Cinema	677420
American Centre Library	820101	Plaza Cinema	699238
British Council	636147/8	Philadelphia Cinema	634144
French Cultural Centre	637009		
Goethe Institute	641993		
Cervantes Institute (Spanish)	610838		
Turkish Cultural Centre	639777		
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Y.W.C.A.	641793		
Y.W.M.A.	664251		
Darat al Funun	643252		
Alia Art Gallery	639303		
Baladna Art Gallery	657132		
Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	675571		
Nabil & Hisham's Theatre	625155		



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Interior Ministry	663111	Water & Irrigation	680100
Justice	663101	Youth / University	604701

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Finnish Consulate	824654/824676
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Greek	671331/2
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Icelandic Consulate	698851
Indian	637262
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Adria Airways	667029
Aeroflot	641510
Aeromexico	694802
Air Canada	630879
Air France	666055/667824
Air India	688301/2
Air Lanka	682140
Alitalia	625203
Alyemda (Air Yemen)	653691
American West Airlines	694802
American Airlines	669068
Arab Wings	894484
Austrian Airlines	693845/694604
Balkan Airlines	665909
British Midland	694802
British Airways	828801
Cathay Pacific	628596
China Airlines	636232
Cyprus Airways	667028
Delta Air Lines	643661
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Emirates Airlines	643341
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Hungarian Airlines	622275
Iberia	637827/644036
Iran Air	622826
Japan Airlines	630879
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Qantas	862288
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Saudia	639333
Scandinavian Airlines	604499
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Sudan Airlines	694501
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United Airlines	641959
US Air	694801/2
TAROM - Romanian	637380
Thai Airways	637195
Trans World Airline	623430
Turkish Airlines	659102
Yemenia Airways	628175
Queen Alla Airport	(08) 53200
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Important Numbers

Emergencies	
Police	192/6211/1
Civil Defence H.Q.	193/198/199
Fire Brigade	622090/3
Ambulance	199
Blood Bank	775121
Traffic Police	625943/634713
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